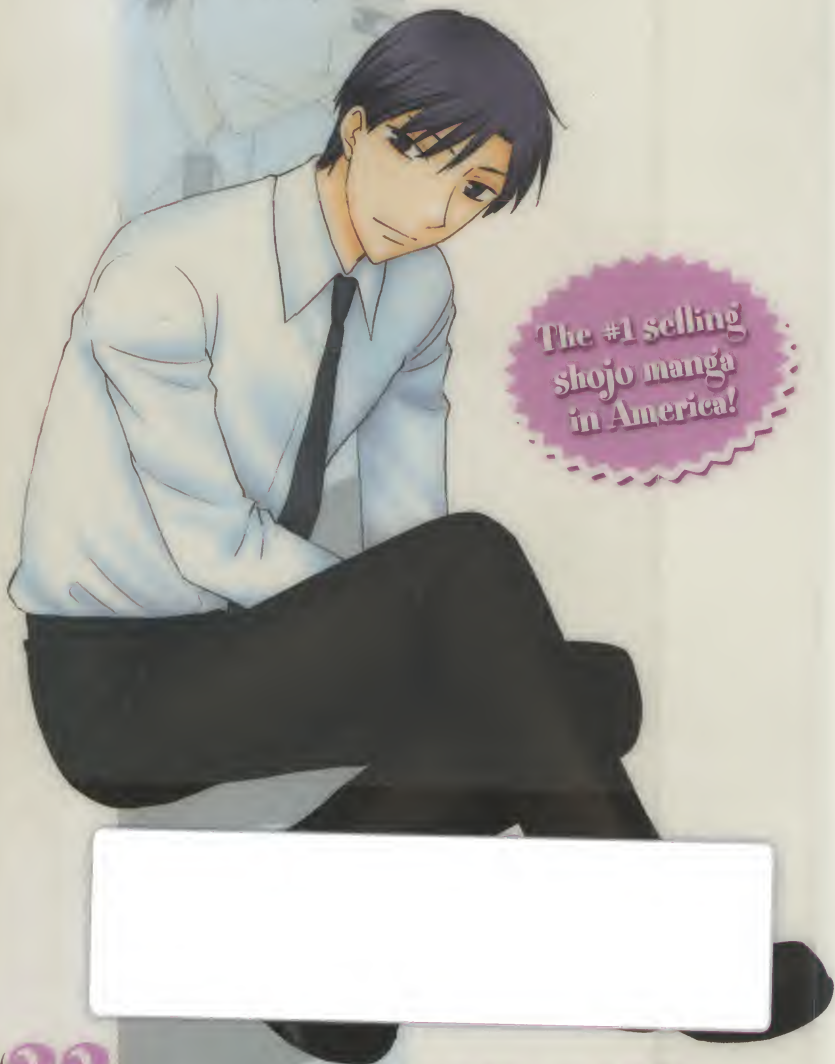


Fruits Basket™

TOKYOPOP



The #1 selling
shojo manga
in America!

22

Natsuki Takaya

Fruits Basket™

Volume 22



Natsuki Takaya

Fruits Basket™

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STORY SO FAR...

Hello, I'm Tohru Honda, and I have come to know a terrible secret. After the death of my mother, I was living by myself in a tent, when the Sohma family took me in. I soon learned that the Sohma family lives with a curse! Each family member is possessed by the vengeful spirit of an animal from the Chinese Zodiac. Whenever one of them becomes weak or is hugged by a member of the opposite sex, that person changes into his or her Zodiac animal!





Tohru Honda

The ever-optimistic heroine of our story. An orphan, she now lives in Shigure's house, along with Yuki and Kyo, and is the only person outside of the family who knows the Sohma family's curse.

Yuki Sohma, the Rat

Soft-spoken. Self-esteem issues. At school, he's called "Prince Yuki."



Kyo Sohma, the Cat

The Cat who was left out of the Zodiac. Hates Yuki, leeks and miso. But mostly Yuki.

Kagura Sohma, the Boar

Bashful, yet headstrong. Determined to marry Kyo, even if it kills him.



Fruits Basket Characters

Mabudachi Trio

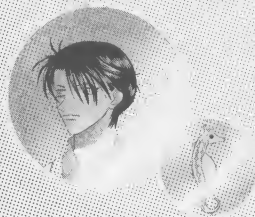


Shigure Sohma, the Dog

Enigmatic, mischievous and a little perverted. A popular novelist.

Hatori Sohma, the Dragon

Family doctor to the Sohmas. Only thing he can't cure is his broken heart.



Ayame Sohma, the Snake

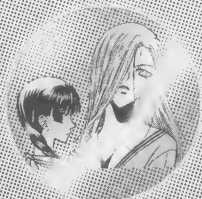
Yuki's older brother. A proud and playful drama queen...er, king. Runs a costume shop.

Saki Hanajima

"Hana-chan." Can sense people's "waves." Goth demeanor scares her classmates.

Arisa Uotani

"Uo-chan." A tough-talking "Yankee" who looks out for her friends.



Tohru's Best Friends



Hiro Sohma, the Ram (or sheep)

This caustic tyke is skilled at throwing verbal barbs, but he has a soft spot for Kisa.

Momiji Sohma, the Rabbit

Half German. He's older than he looks. His mother rejected him because of the Sohma curse. His little sister, Momo, has been kept from him most of her life.



Hatsuharu Sohma, the Ox

The nicest of guys, except when he goes "Black." Then you'd better watch out. He was once in a relationship with Rin.

Kisa Sohma, the Tiger

Kisa became shy and self-conscious due to constant teasing by her classmates. Yuki, who has similar insecurities, feels particularly close to Kisa.



Fruits Basket Characters

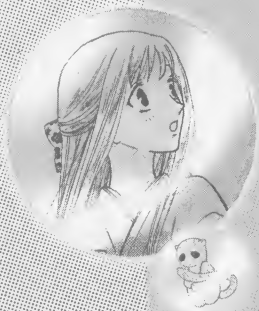
Isuzu "Rin" Sohma, the Horse

She was once in a relationship with Hatsuharu (Haru)...and Tohru leaves her rather cold. Rin is full of pride, and she can't stand the amount of deference the other Sohma family members give Akito.



Ritsu Sohma, the Monkey

This shy, kimono-wearing member of the Sohma family is gorgeous. But this "she" is really a he!! Cross-dressing calms his nerves.



Kureno Sohma, the Rooster (or bird)

He is Akito's very favorite, and spends almost all of his time on the Sohma estate, tending to Akito's every desire. Kureno was born possessed by the spirit of the Bird, but his curse broke long ago...which means we've never seen him transformed. He pities Akito's loneliness, and can't bring himself to leave her.

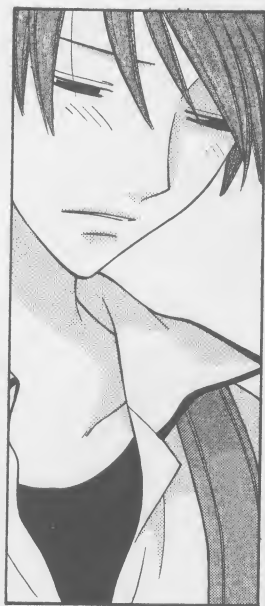


Akito Sohma

The head of the Sohma clan. A dark figure of many secrets. Treated with fear and reverence. It has recently been revealed that Akito is actually a woman!



"God"





Chapter 126

Fruits Basket



I HAVE TO
FACE WHAT
I'VE BEEN
RUNNING
FROM.

THAT'S
ALL
THERE IS
TO IT.



BUT...

...TO ME...

THE
ANSWER
TO THAT
QUESTION—
NOT JUST
THE WHAT,
BUT THE
HOW...

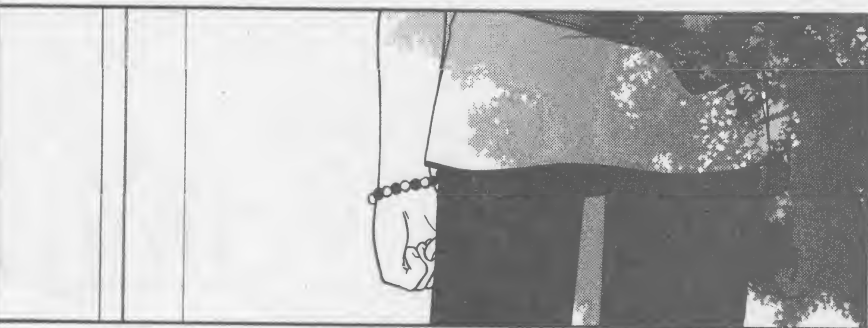
IT'S ALL
SO DAMN
SIMPLE.

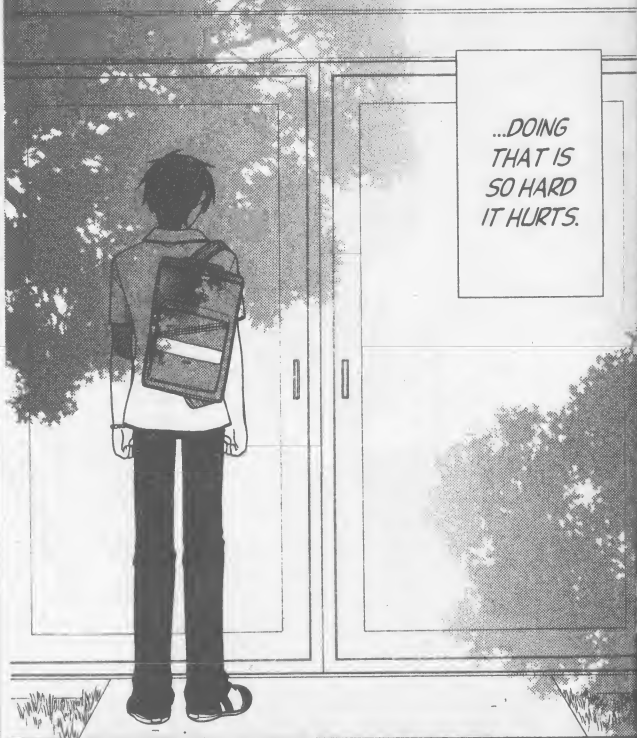
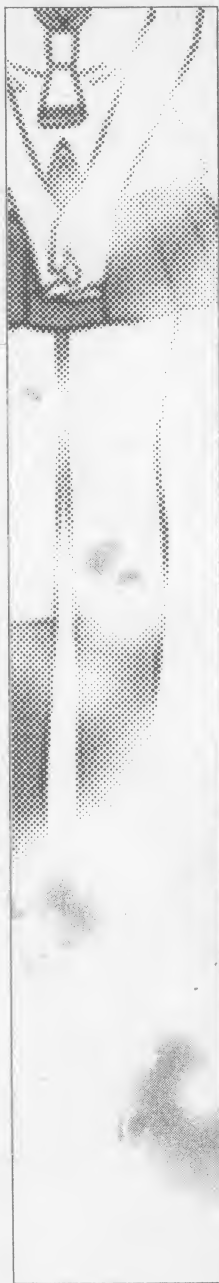
IT'S SO
SIMPLE.



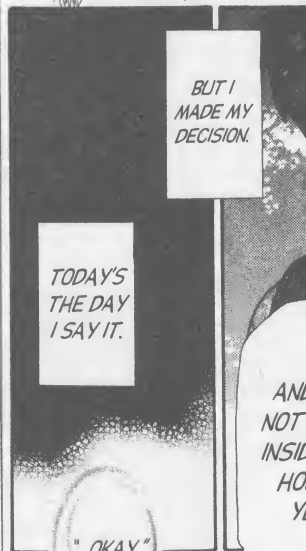
"...THERE
ARE OTHER
THINGS YOU
SHOULD
BE DOING."

"AREN'T
THERE?"





...DOING
THAT IS
SO HARD
IT HURTS.



BUT I
MADE MY
DECISION.

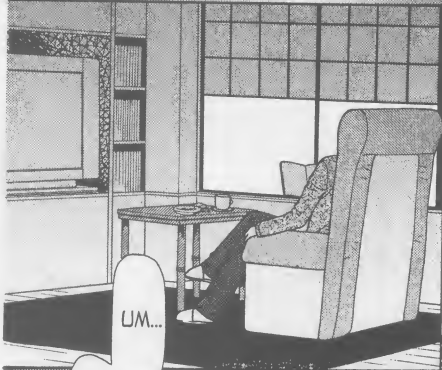
TODAY'S
THE DAY
I SAY IT.

"...OKAY."



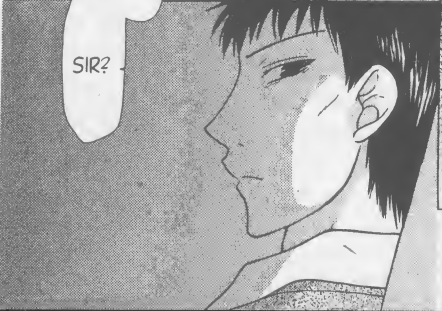
I FEEL
KINDA
SICK.

AND I'M
NOT EVEN
INSIDE MY
HOUSE
YET.



UM...

SIR?



"...OKAY."

"IT'S..."



...WHAT?

ガッ



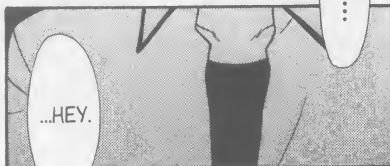
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

AND
LOOK
AT YOU.

CALM
AS YOU
PLEASE.
HOW DARE
YOU!



...




...HEY.



WHAT IS
THIS? WHO
SAID YOU
COULD
LET HIM
IN HERE?!

B-BUT I
THOUGHT--

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?!



AND
WHOSE
FAULT DO
YOU THINK
THAT IS?!

I JUST
HAVEN'T
BEEN
FEELING
VERY
WELL
LATELY.

I'M TAKING
SOME
TIME OFF.



ARE
NORMAL
OFFICE
WORKERS
AT HOME
THIS TIME
OF DAY?

YOU NEVER
DID TAKE
WORK
SERIOUS-
LY.

SHUT YOUR
MOUTH!
I WORK!

I WORK
HARD, I'LL
HAVE YOU
KNOW!




I
JUST...



WHY DON'T
YOU JUST
ADMIT TO
WHAT YOU
DID?!

YOU BET
IT'S YOURS!

...WHAT?
MINE?



YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO
KILLED YOUR
MOTHER!



I FEEL
SICK.

YOU'RE
JUST
A...

...JUST
BECAUSE
YOUR HAND
IN IT WAS
PASSIVE.


DON'T
ASSUME
YOU'LL BE
FORGIVEN...

...AND
SET TO
BOILING.

IT'S LIKE
HATE.
FEAR.

SADNESS.

IT'S LIKE
ALL THOSE
FEELINGS
WERE
TOSSED INTO
A POT...



IT'S
ALL...

...MY
FAULT.

KEEP IT
TOGETHER.

...FINE.

...HA
HA.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.



YOU
ADMITTED
TO IT! I
HEARD
YOU!

HEY! YOU
HEARD
HIM, DIDN'T
YOU?!

IT'S
ABOUT
TIME!

HA!

HA
HA!

ER...

CONTACT
THE MAIN
HOUSE!

YOU
WILL
ADMIT
TO IT!

SO!

NO.

I WON'T.

I HOPE YOU
BEAR THE
BURDEN
OF KILLING
HER...

...AND
WALLOW
AWAY
THERE FOR
THE REST
OF YOUR
DAYS!

MAKE
THEM
COME AND
DRAG HIM
OUT OF
MY SIGHT!

y...

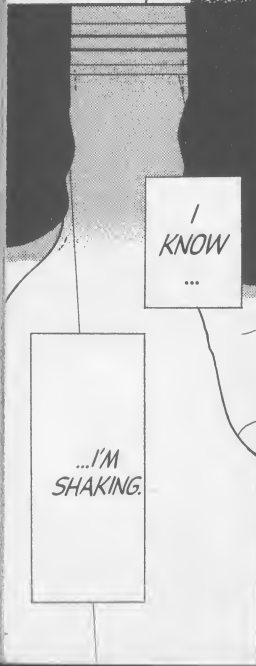
YES,
SIR!



I REFUSE.

I
WON'T...

...GO IN
THERE.



I
KNOW
...

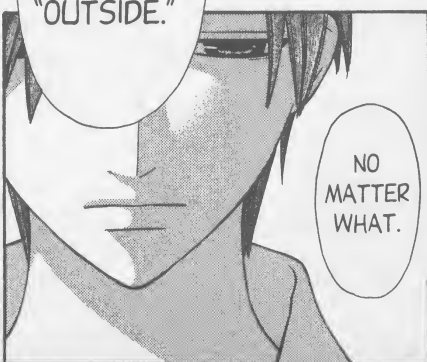
...I'M
SHAKING.

I CAME
HERE...

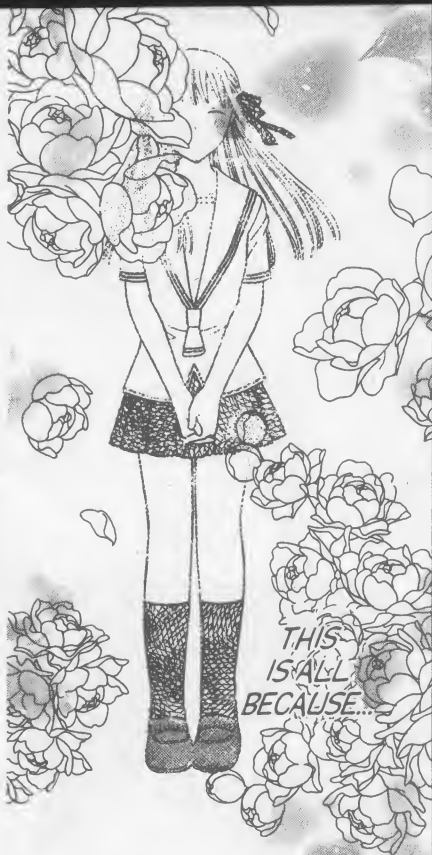
...TO
TELL YOU
THAT.



I'M
GONNA
LIVE
"OUTSIDE."



NO
MATTER
WHAT.



...YOU'RE SO
IMPORTANT
TO ME.

THIS
IS ALL
BECAUSE...

LOOK.

...EVEN
THOUGH I
COULDN'T DO
SOMETHING
SO SIMPLE...

...YOU DIDN'T
MAKE FUN
OF ME.

YOU
DIDN'T GET
FRUSTRATED
WITH ME.

YOU DID ALL
YOU COULD
TO SUPPORT
ME, TO CARE
FOR ME...

...TO KEEP
REACHING
OUT TO ME.

IT'S SO
OBVIOUS,
IT'S ALMOST
STUPID.

ANY
NORMAL
PERSON...

...WOULDN'T
HAVE TO
DECLARE
THINGS
EVERY
SINGLE
TIME.

THEY
WOULDN'T
HAVE TO
BE AFRAID.

BUT...



YOU
...?

I...MET
SOMEONE.

STARTING
NOW,
AND...FOR
GOOD.

AND I
WANNA
BE WITH
HER.

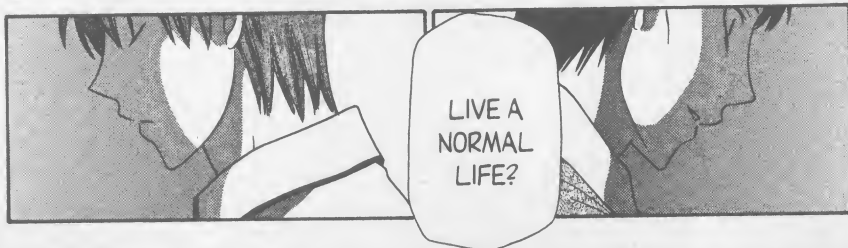


THERE'S NO
POSSIBLE
WAY...

THAT
WOULD
NEVER BE
ALLOWED.

WH-WHAT
ON EARTH
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?

NEVER.




LIVE A
NORMAL
LIFE?




NOT
FOR
YOU!

I WON'T
ALLOW
IT!



YOU
HAVE TO
PAY FOR
WHAT
YOU'VE
DONE!

MAKE
IT UP
TO ME!




DO YOU
KNOW HOW
MUCH SHAME
I'VE HAD
TO ENDURE
BECAUSE
OF YOU?!

HOW
MUCH
MY LIFE
HAS BEEN
RUINED?!



YOU HAVE
TO PAY
ME BACK
FOR WHAT
YOU'VE
DONE!



I WON'T
ALLOW
IT. I'LL
NEVER
ALLOW
IT!

DAMMIT
...!

JUST
DISAPPEAR



IS THIS
HOW
EVERYONE
GETS A
LAUGH?!


BY
THROWING
MORE MUD
ON MY
FACE?!

YOU

GAVE
BIRTH

TO
SUCH

A
CHILD.



AND IT'S
ALL
BECAUSE
YOU WERE
BORN
ON THIS
EARTH!

WHY...

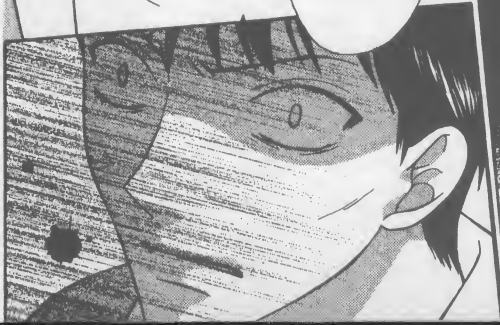
...DID SHE
HAVE
TO GIVE
BIRTH TO
YOU?!



IT WAS
YOU?

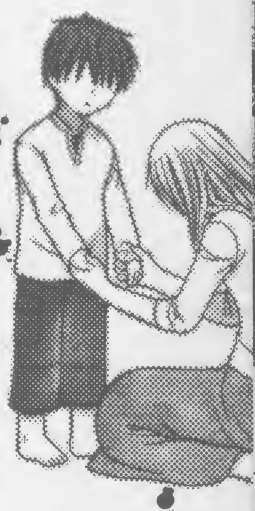


YOU
WERE
THE ONE
WHO
SAID
THAT TO
MOM?



*YOU
TWO.*

*BOTH
OF YOU.*



*JUST
DIS...*



W...



IT'S NOT
MY FAULT!
YOU DROVE
HER TO IT!

HER
DEATH
WAS YOUR
FAULT,
NOT...

ARE YOU
TRYING TO
PUT THE
BLAME ON
ME NOW?!

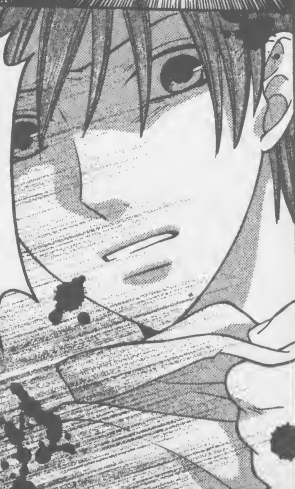
NOT
MINE!

"IT'S
NOT MY
FAULT!"

IT'S ALL
YOUR
FAULT!

IT'S NOT MY
FAULT YOU
WERE BORN!
I DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING
WRONG!

IT'S NOT
MY FAULT!
YOU
MONSTER!





I WAS
JUST
A KID.

IT WAS
TOO HARD
FOR ME TO
UNDER-
STAND.

...LIKE "I
WOULD'VE
UNDERSTOOD
IF I'D JUST
BEEN OLDER."

AND I'M
NOT GONNA
MAKE SOME
COP-OUT
EXCUSE...

ONCE
YOU'RE
DEAD...

...YOU
CAN'T TRY
ANYTHING
ANYMORE.

YOU CAN'T
TAKE
ANYTHING
BACK.

WAS IT
HARD...

...CARRY-
ING...

...ALL
THAT
PAIN?

DID YOU
FEEL
ALONE?



I DIDN'T WANT
YOU TO DIE.

I WANTED...

...FOR YOU TO NOT GIVE
UP ON YOURSELF...

...WHILE YOU WERE
STILL ALIVE.

MOM...

FINALLY.

I CAN
FINALLY
THINK LIKE
THAT NOW.

BUT IT'S
ALREADY
TOO LATE.

I WANTED
YOU...

...TO LIVE.





NO.

I WON'T...
GIVE UP ON
MYSELF.

NOT
ANYMORE.



I'M
GONNA
TRY.

WHILE
I'M STILL
ALIVE...

REALLY
LIVE.

...I'M
GONNA
TRY TO
LIVE.



NNGH!

...
NN.

NO!
AAAH!

HE'S
GOING
TO KILL
ME!

YANK

YOU COULD
NEVER--

LET
G--

...GH.



THE BOY'S
GOING TO
KILL ME...!

SOMEBODY!

SOMEBODY
HELP ME!



LIKE HIS
FATHER
WISHES?

SHALL
I SEND
SOMEONE
TO FETCH
HIM?

THE CAT,
I MEAN.



I'LL GO.

...NO.



...I WANT TO
TALK TO
HIS FATHER
ABOUT.

THERE'S
SOME-
THING...

EXCUSE
ME.



HE'S GOING
TO KILL ME!
HE'S GOING
TO KILL ME!

HEY.

HE'S GOING
TO KILL
ME...!





KYO IS
FREE.



HON-
ESTLY?

DO YOU
THINK HIS
FATHER
WILL
APPROVE?

YES.

...TO HAVE
THAT
ISOLATED
ROOM DE-
STROYED.

AND I'M
PLAN-
NING...



YOU'VE
CHANGED...

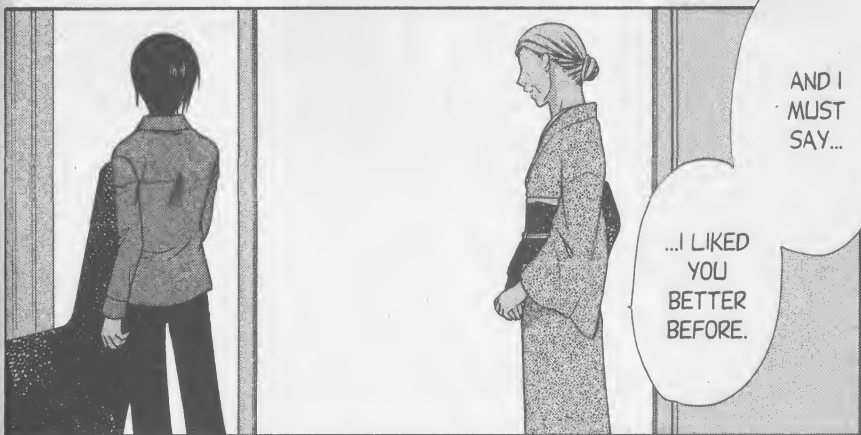
...AKITO-
SAN.



EITHER
WAY.

I'VE
MADE MY
DECISION.

NOW?



AND I
MUST
SAY...

...I LIKED
YOU
BETTER
BEFORE.



FINE.

...

BUT AS
FOR ME...

THEN STAY
WHERE
YOU ARE.

AS LONG
AS YOU
WANT.



IT'S SO
SIMPLE.



...I'M
GOING
NOW.



I FINALLY
HAVE IT IN
MY HANDS.



...HARD.

THE
ANSWER,
AND THE
HOW...

...THEY'RE
BOTH SO
SIMPLE.

IT'S
JUST...

NEVER!

I'M SURE
HIS OWN
ANSWER...

...IS SO
SIMPLE IT'S
SCARY TOO.

AND
IT'LL
NEED...

...A
TERRIFYING
AMOUNT
OF TIME.

W...

WAIT! I...

HEY!

I WON'T
ALLOW
IT!

I'LL NEVER
ALLOW IT!

AND THAT'S
EXACTLY
WHY...

...IT FEELS SO
IMPORTANT.

I'LL...

...BE
BACK.

IF I'M
GONNA GO
ON LIVING.

I GUESS
I HAVE NO
CHOICE.

I'VE
GOTTA
KEEP
GOING.

IT'S
OKAY.

REALLY.

I KNOW
THEY
WON'T.

OKAY?

...HATE
YOU, HIRO-
CHAN.

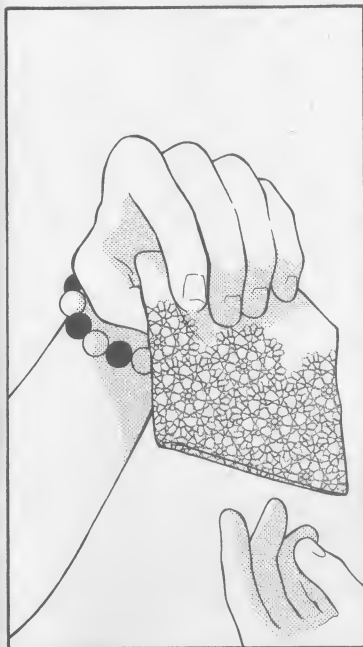
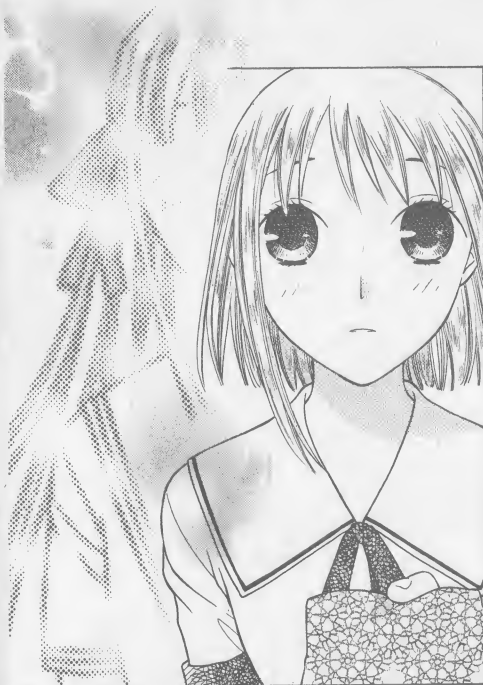
NO ONE'S
GOING TO...

BECAUSE
YOU
TALKED
TO ME
FIRST.

...I'M SO
HAPPY.

Y'KNOW?







LOOK,
YOU.

Agh.

...
THANKS.



I
SAID I'M
HELPING!

FORGET
IT-I CAN
DO IT
MYSELF.

FORGET
ABOUT
THANKING
HER AND
JUST CLEAN
UP, OKAY?

I'LL
HELP
YOU.



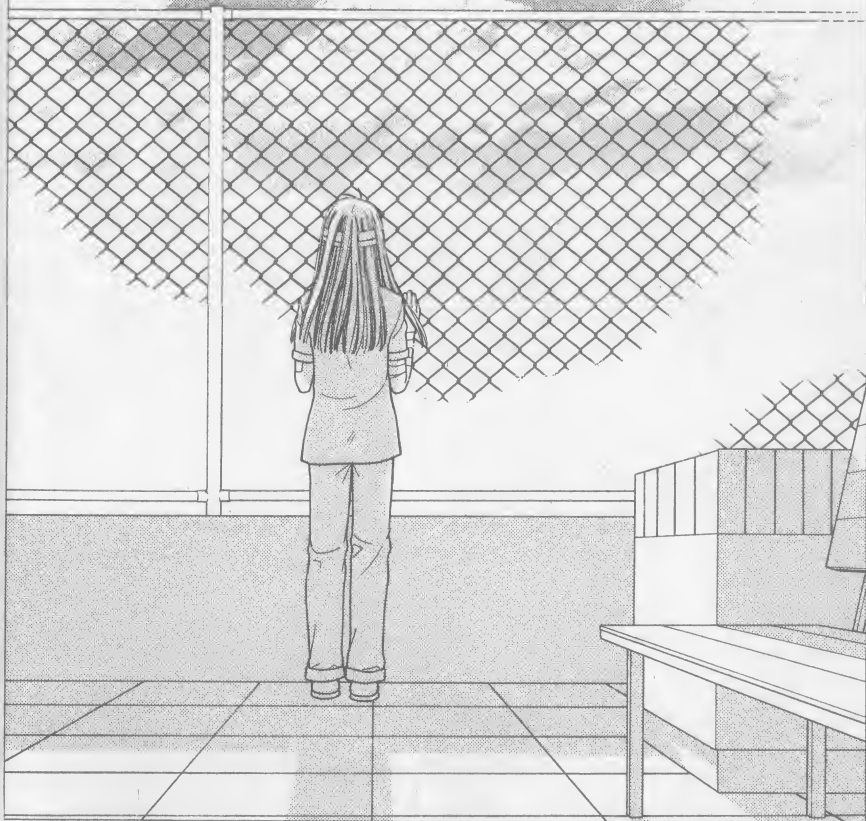
I WANNA
SEE YOU.



IF I'M HAL-
LUCINATING
ABOUT HER
NOW...

...I MUST
HAVE IT
BAD.

*I REALLY WANNA
SEE YOU.*





Chapter 127



I'D HEARD
BITS OF
THE STORY
FROM
TOHRLI.

AND
I MET
WITH
AKITO
SOHMA...

...JUST
THE
OTHER
DAY.





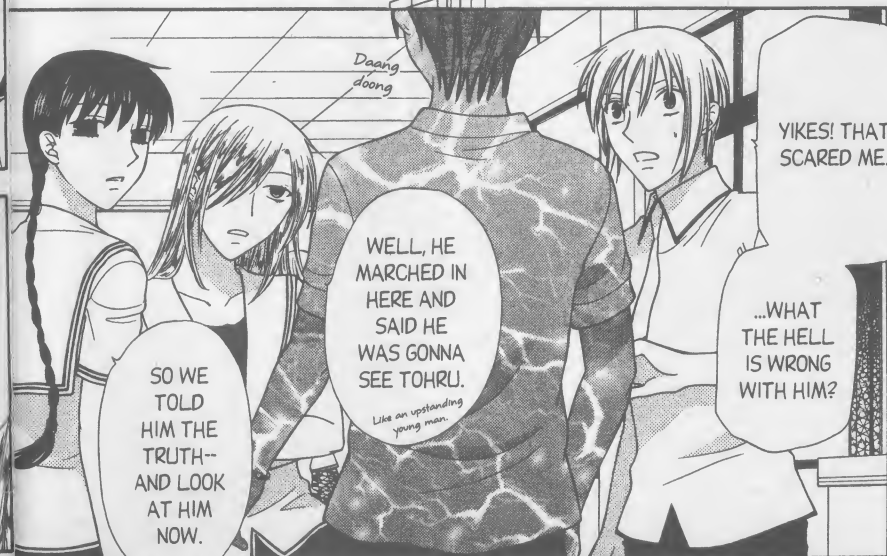


...TO
WORRY
ABOUT
ME.



SERI-
OUSLY?

SHE
SHOULDN'T
HAVE
TIME...



WELL, HE
MARCHED IN
HERE AND
SAID HE
WAS GONNA
SEE TOHRU.

*Like an upstanding
young man.*

SO WE
TOLD
HIM THE
TRUTH--
AND LOOK
AT HIM
NOW.

YIKES! THAT
SCARED ME.

...WHAT
THE HELL
IS WRONG
WITH HIM?



TOHRU-KUN
SEEMS TO
THINK HE
DUMPED HER.

CLAAAAAHO

IT'S LIKE...
SHE
DOESN'T
WANT TO
SEE HIM.

OR
MAYBE
...

INDEED.

Yeah,
you're
right!

I KNOW
WHAT
YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOUT.

WHENEVER HIS
NAME CAME
UP, HONDA-
SAN WAS
OBVIOUSLY
SCARED.

S...

Scared?!

NICE
WORK,
GENIUS.

Fruits Basket

Nice to meet you and hello. I'm Takaya, presenting Volume 22. The cover has Tohru's Daddy on it this time around. I was going to make the color behind him white, but then he would end up looking like Akkii, so I changed it.

(It might not matter much, but in my head, Akkii has a white image.)

Now then. In the magazine, Furuba has safely reached its final chapter. The next volume will be the last graphic novel.

Sometimes people ask me if that makes me sad, but it doesn't-- not really, anyway. An author never *actually* says goodbye to her works.

It's true that a manga ends, but it's something that will continue to exist inside me forever. Maybe I'm not explaining it very well? Basically, what I want to say is that I think the ones who will really be sad will be the people who have kept reading and loving Furuba.

Thank you very much. Now please enjoy Furuba Volume 22!



PULL
OFF WHAT,
I WONDER?

ANYWAY,
DON'T YOU
DARE COME
SEE HER UNTIL
SHE'S OUT OF
THE HOSPITAL.
IF YOU DO...

...I'LL
PULL IT
OFF!!

Tee hee hee.

Just a...

WHO DIED
AND MADE
YOU TWO
QUEENS?!

SHE'S
GETTING
OUT.

AND
SOON.

WHY DON'T
YOU PICK
HER UP
WHEN SHE
DOES?

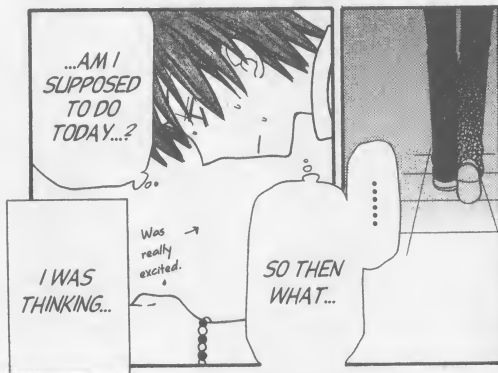
IT DOESN'T
CHANGE THE
FACT THAT
YOU MADE HER
CRY. YOU PISS
ME OFF. YOU'D
BETTER DO
SOME SERIOUS
REFLECTION,
DUMBASS!

Baldy!

NO ONE
CARES ABOUT
WHAT'S
CONVENIENT
FOR YOU,
STUPID.

Whoa?!

SO SHE
IS JUST
GETTING
BACK
AT ME.



...I SUPPOSE
I FEEL A
LITTLE
SORRY
FOR HIM.

DO YOU
REALLY?
HUNH.

HA
HA.

AND
YET...

...WE NEED
TO TAKE
THIS STAND.
SIMPLY SAYING
HIS NAME
REALLY DOES
AFFECT HER.

You're
hopeless.

What's
wrong? You
get yelled at
again? Yikes.

I'm
gonna
pound
you.

WITH
ALL HE'S
GOING
THROUGH
...

...THAT
I SHOULD
TELL
SHISHOU
ABOUT
YESTERDAY.

BUT
THIS WAS
A SHOCK.

CRAP...I
SHOULDN'T
HAVE SAID
ANYTHING
TO GIVE HER
THE WRONG
IDEA LIKE
THAT.

BUT I
WOULDN'T
DO SOME
THINGS...

...TO
A GIRL
I DIDN'T
LIKE.





BUT IF
YOU CAN
SEE HIM...

...YOU
SHOULD
SEE HIM?

...DON'T
YOU
THINK...



I'VE BEEN
THINKING,
Y'KNOW.

YOU'RE
PROBABLY
RIGHT.

ABOUT
KURENO-
SAN'S 26
YEARS IN
THIS WORLD.

THE THINGS...

THE THINGS
HE COULDN'T.

THE
THINGS HE
ACCOM-
PLISHED.



I STAB-
BED HIM.

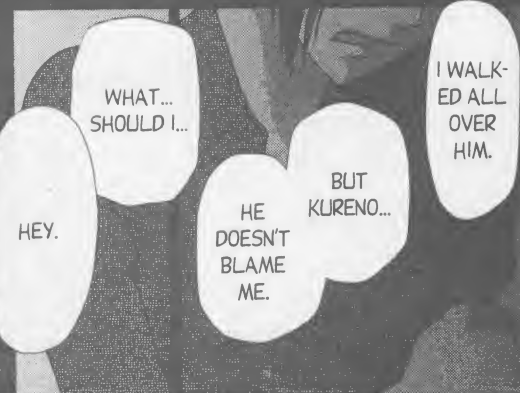
BE-
CAUSE
OF ME.

I...



...
CHAINED
HIM
DOWN.

I...



WHAT...
SHOULD I...

HEY.

BUT
KURENO...
HE
DOESN'T
BLAME
ME.

I WALK-
ED ALL
OVER
HIM.

...HE LOVED.

KURENO.

HE'S...

HE'S IN
THIS SAME
HOSPITAL.

RIGHT
NOW.



KURENO-
SAN
MENTIONED
THAT...



YOU'RE A
WOMAN,
AREN'T
YOU?

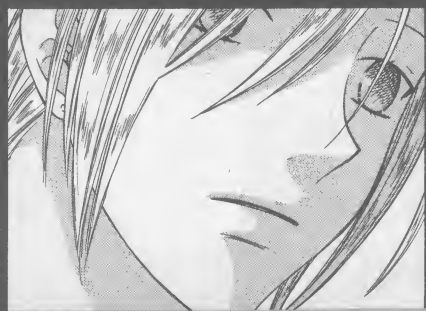


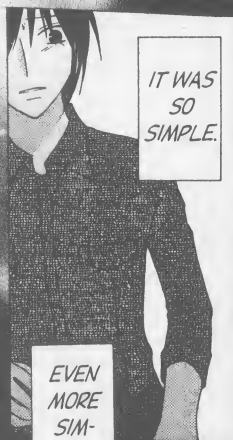
I THINK
I SEE NOW.

...HE HAS
SOMEONE...

...HE
HAS
TO "BE
THERE"
FOR.

YOU'RE
THE ONE,
AREN'T
YOU?



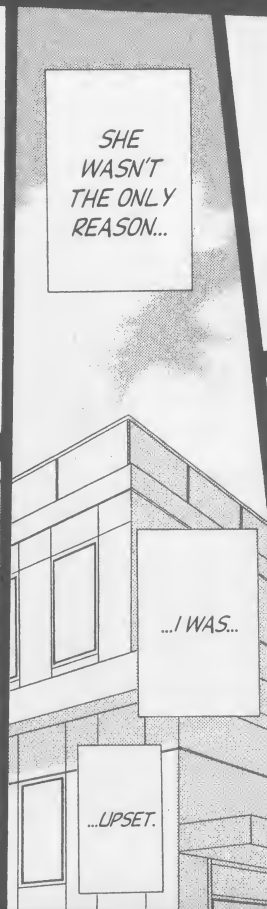


IT WAS
SO
SIMPLE.

EVEN
MORE
SIM-
PLE...



...THAN
THAT.



SHE
WASN'T
THE ONLY
REASON...

...I WAS...

...UPSET.



...GH.

UW...



NN...

KURENO-
SAN HAD
LIVED 26
YEARS.

AND I'D
BARELY
BEEN A
PART OF
THAT.



I'D BEEN
POLISHING THE
MEMORIES OF
THAT ONE DAY
OVER AND OVER.



I THOUGHT
IT WAS
KINDA
PATHETIC.

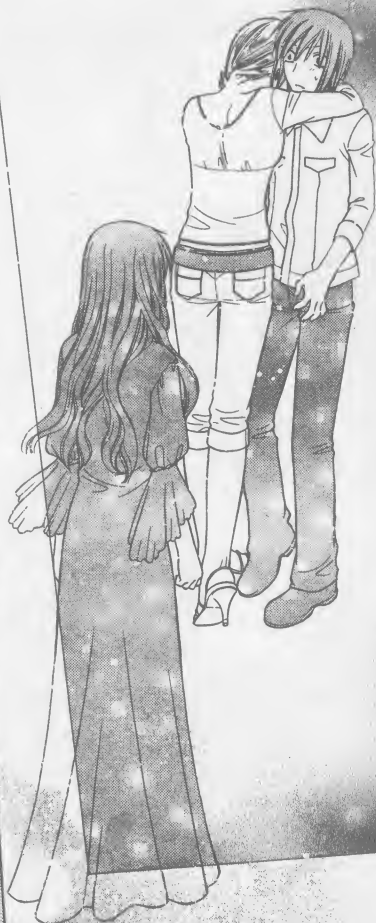


AND THAT
MORTIFIED
ME.

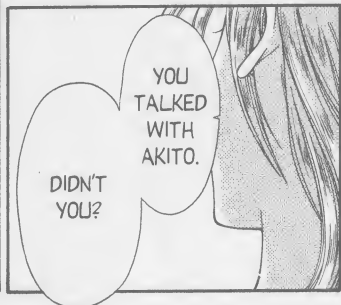
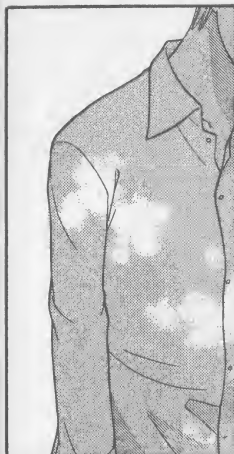
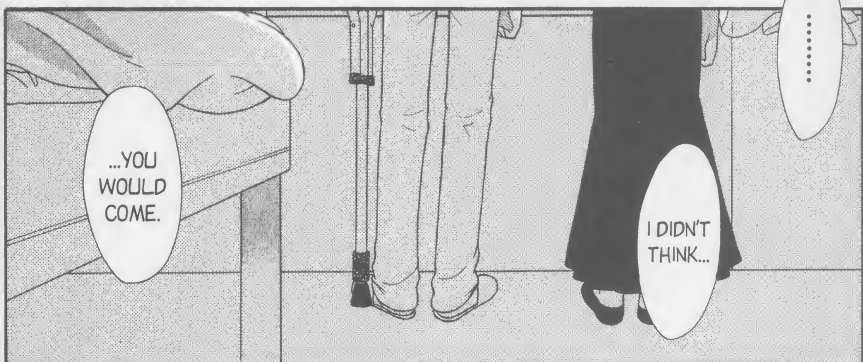


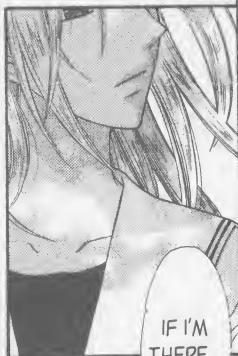
IT WAS THE
BASIC FACT...

...THAT I WAS
AN OUTSIDER.









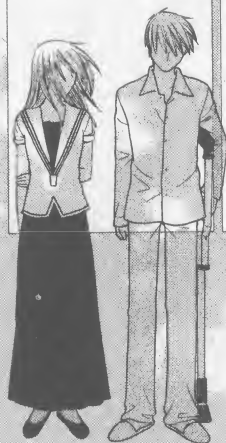
IF I'M
THERE...

...AKITO
WILL
NEVER...

...STOP
BEING
SICK AT
HEART.

UNTIL
THE END.

I HAVE TO
DISAPPEAR.



ANYWHERE!

THEN
GO.

CAN'T
YOU GO
ANY-
WHERE
YOU
WANT?

HUNH.

UNTIL
THE
END.



I'LL GO
ANYWHERE.

HONESTLY.

AND DO
Y'KNOW
WHY?

HMPH.



I'M
NOT...

...GONNA
SAY IT.



IT'S OKAY.

REALLY.

RIGHT NOW, I CAN WAIT.

BUT I'M NOT
GONNA BE LEFT
OUT OF THINGS.

NOT ANYMORE.





JUST
GO ON
AND...

...LIVE.



HOWEVER
YOU
WANT.

WE HAVE
NOTHING
TO TALK
ABOUT.



DOES IT
MATTER?

HUH?
WAIT!

I WANNA
TALK TO--

W
H
A
P



W
H
A
T
!

...HUH?

...

.....



C
R
E
E
E
E
A
K

OH...?

I HATE
REPEATING
MYSELF,
OKAY?!



I MEAN
WHAT I SAID!

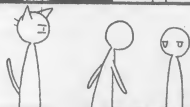
...

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN--



LEAVING
ALREADY?

A A I C H A N.



WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?!

HM? OH, HE
CAME TO SEE
TOHRU-KUN IN
THE HOSPITAL,
SO I CAME
ALONG.

I WANTED
TO THANK
ZUMA-SAN.

Mwa ha
ha ha ha

THEY'RE
LIKE...
FRIENDS!
GACK!



I TOLD YOU
TO STOP.
YOU HAVE
TO STOP.

WHY? IT'S
CUTE. YOU
SHOULD
BE MORE
CONFIDENT.

DON'T
CALL ME
THAT.

That's
not it.

W H A ?!





.....

YES.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.

WHY DON'T
YOU HAVE A
NICE LONG
TALK INSIDE?

AFTER
THAT...

...A LITTLE
TIME
PASSED.

S
O
H
M
A

AND THEN
KURENO-SAN
REALLY DID
LEAVE THE
SOHMA HOME.

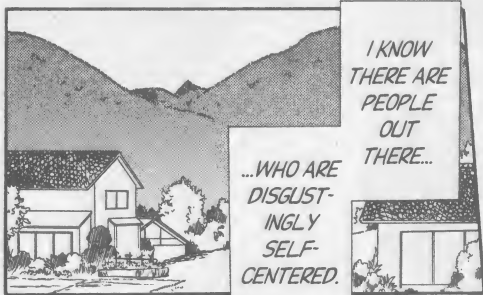
AND
THEN...

HE
SAID...

HE DIDN'T
TELL A LOT
OF PEOPLE.

...THINGS WOULD
WORK OUT
BETTER IF HE
LEFT THINGS LIKE
HE'D NEVER EVEN
BEEN THERE.

AND HE
GOT RID OF
ANYTHING HE
COULDN'T
CARRY
WITH HIM.



I KNOW
THERE ARE
PEOPLE
OUT
THERE...

...WHO ARE
DISGUST-
INGLY
SELF-
CENTERED.

BUT I THINK
IT'S OKAY FOR
SOME PEOPLE
TO BE THE
OPPOSITE.

TO ALWAYS
PUT THEM-
SELVES LAST.

THAT'S NOT
SO BAD.

ARE YOU
SURE...
YOU'RE OKAY
WITH THIS?



...HE
SMILED.



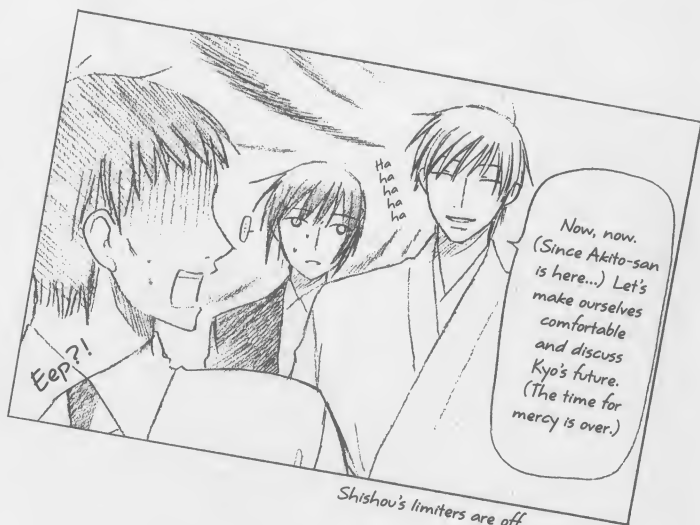


BECAUSE...

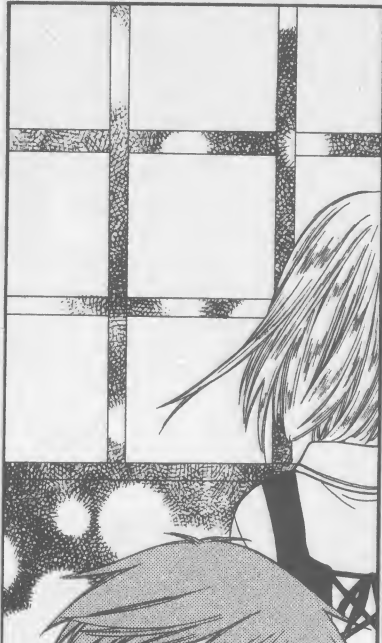












UM
...
I'M
HERE
...

WHY
ARE YOU
STANDING
IN FRONT
OF AKITO'S
MANSION?

OH.



FOR
WHO?



...FOR
MORAL
SUPPORT.







HE WANTS
TO TALK?

AKITO
WANTS TO
TALK?

YEAH.



HE SAYS HE
WANTS ALL
THE ZODIAC
TOGETHER.



UH...

AND THAT
INCLUDES
ME?



I NEVER...

...DISLIKED
THAT
ABOUT
YOU.

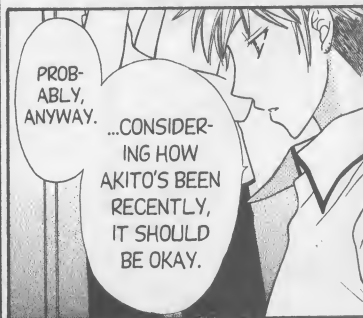
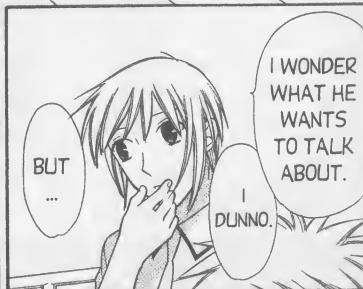
There aren't many columns
(again) this volume...

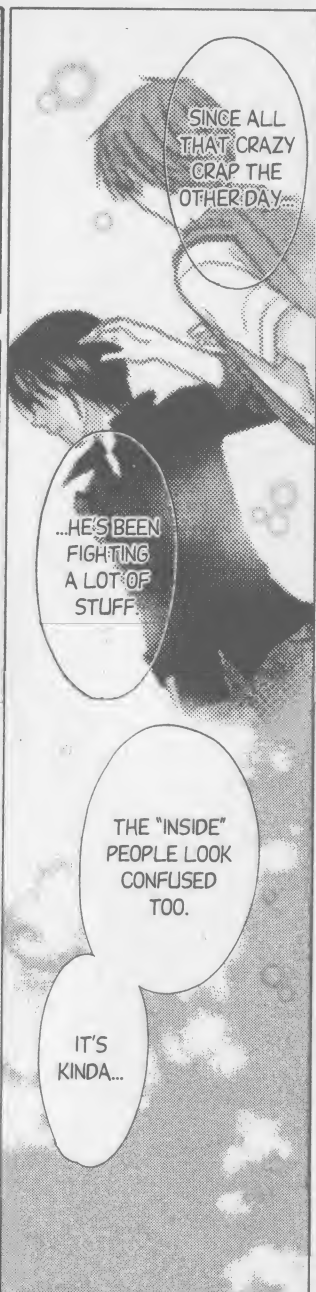


He was hard to draw,
yet easy to draw.

Kuren0

- Kuren0, his father, and his mother make his a family of three.
- Since becoming an adult, he hasn't interacted with his parents much.
- And ever since he became the first one to become normal, he avoided interacting with the other members of the Zodiac.
- He may have been the most lonely of all.
- When he first showed up (when he met Uo-chan for the first time at the convenience store), he was holding a lot of bags of snacks because Akito suddenly said she wanted to eat them late at night--so he'd gone to buy them.
- I'm ashamed to say it, but I couldn't make the time to explain that reason in the main story...
- Come to think of it, how does everyone pronounce "Kuren0"? With me, it changes whenever I say it.
- Sometimes I'll accent it the same way I do "Momiji," and sometimes it's the same as "Shigure."







YOU'RE
REALLY NOT
PULLING YOUR
PUNCHES
THESE DAYS,
ARE YOU?

RIGHT--
I FORGOT.

HEARING THE
STUPID VOICE
OF AN IDIOT
REMINDED ME.

WHAT?
WHAT ABOUT
SHIGURE?

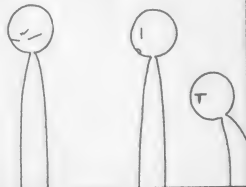
NO, I
MEAN...

OH.



HONDA-SAN
GETS OUT OF
THE HOSPITAL
TOMORROW.

*Utahani-san
told me.*

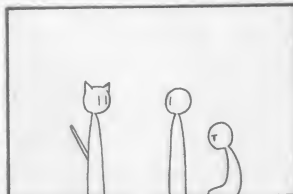


THEY SAY
TEASING'S A
SIGN OF LOVE.

I'M
SORRY.

I'M REALLY
SORRY.

FORGET IT--JUST
TELL ME WHAT
YOU REMEMBERED
ALREADY!





YOU ONLY
REMEMBERED
NOW?!



THOSE TWO...

I DON'T
KNOW.

STAMP
STAMP

...ARE VERY LUCKY.

OKAY--I KNOW
NOW! I KNOW
SHE'S GETTING
OUT!

STAMP
STAMP

SO NOW IT'S
OKAY, RIGHT?!

IT'S OKAY,
RIGHT?!

MAN,
YOU'RE
ANNOYING!
YEAH, IT'S
FINE.

BUT!

WHEEZE
GASP
WHEEZE

GASP
WHEEZE
GASP

THAT'S
NO FUN.

THE PRINCE
TOLD YOU
ALREADY?

We were
too kind.



... NNGH.

IT'S...OKAY.
I'LL MAKE
AN EFFORT.

I mean,
she does
think you
dumped
her and
all...

THEN
MAKE
SOME
EFFORT
NOW.

YOU CAN'T
GET UPSET IF
SHE RUNS AWAY
FROM YOU.



WHAT DO
YOU THINK'LL
LOOK GOOD ON
HER, KYON?

WHAT?
CLOTHES?



THEY'RE
BOTH
FINE.

THIS IS
SUPPOSED
TO BE ONE
OF THE
THINGS
MEN ARE
GOOD FOR.

HEY,
HEEY.



MAYBE WE
SHOULDN'T
DO THIS.

YOU KINDA
SOUND
LIKE AN
OLD MAN.

What?
REALLY?



WE THOUGHT
WE'D GET HER
A PRESENT TO
CELEBRATE
HER GETTING
BETTER.

I...DON'T
REALLY
KNOW
ABOUT...

UH...

women's
clothes

I'M JEALOUS.

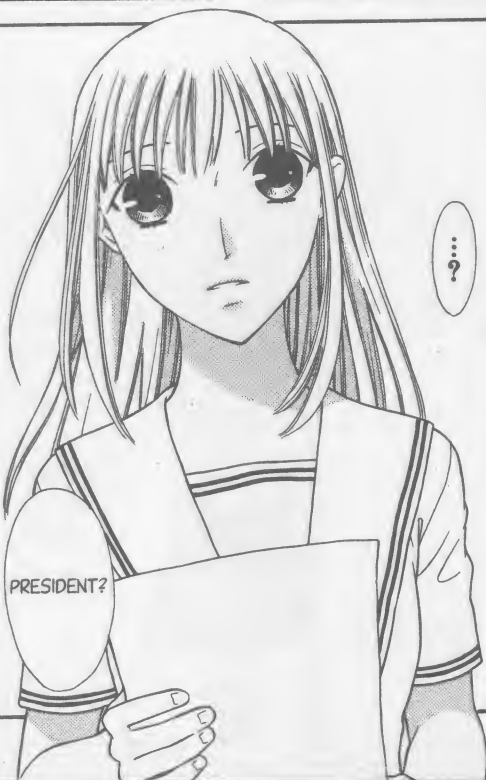
STUDENT
COUNCIL ROOM

I mean,
she
thinks
you
dumped
her...

...SHE MIGHT NOT
WEAR WHAT
WE GET HER.

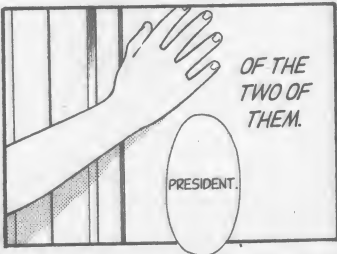
IF SHE
FOUND OUT
YOU PICKED
IT OUT...

MY, HOW
TERRIBLE.



PRESIDENT?

...?
?



OF THE
TWO OF
THEM.

PRESIDENT.



HERE.

I
FINISHED
DOING
THE
TOTALS.



I WORKED
A LITTLE
HARDER
THAN
USUAL.

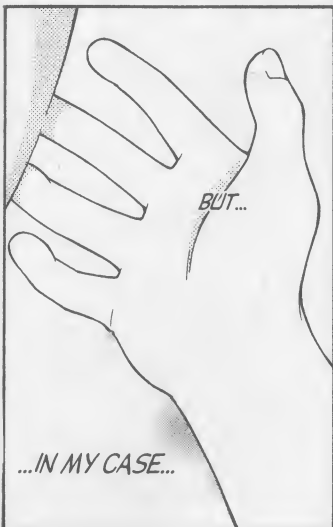
WELL...



... RIGHT.

THANK
YOU.

YOU DID
THOSE
FAST.



BUT...

...IN MY CASE...

SHE ALREADY
KNOWS.

AND SHE HAS
FOR A WHILE.




HONDA-
SAN
KNOWS.

THAT
KYO'S
NOT...


...A NORMAL
PERSON.





...THAT SHE
MAY OR MAY
NOT ACCEPT.

...THEN I HAVE
TO TELL HER
THE ONE THING...



I HAVE TO
TELL HER.

IF I WANT TO STAY
WITH HER...



ARE YOU
GOING TO
HOLD A
BANQUET?




SO
WHAT'S
YOUR
PLAN?

I KNOW
YOU'RE
COLLECTING
EVERYONE.

...





IF IT
MEANS I'LL
BE FREE...

...FROM
YOUR BAD
BEHAVIOR...

...THEN
I WILL BE
RELIEVED.



...LEAVE
ME AND GO
WHEREVER
YOU PLEASE.

YOU'LL BE
RELEASED
FROM ME.

YOU CAN
JUST...



BUT THAT
FIERY
TEMPER OF
YOURS WON'T
BE CURED
OVERNIGHT.

!

I SAID
I'VE HAD
ENOUGH
OF--

I'M NOT
"LOOKING
DOWN"
ON YOU.

カ
ハ
ハ



...EVERYONE
LOOKING
DOWN ON ME
ANYMORE.



I'VE HAD
IT WITH
THIS.

I DON'T
WANT...



AND
HERE.

A GIFT.

I GUESS
YOU COULD
CALL IT A
FAREWELL
PRESENT.



I'M
TEASING
YOU.

BE SURE
NOT TO GET
THOSE TWO
CONFUSED.





CRAP.



I'M
FREAKING
OUT MORE
BY THE
SECOND.

UNLESS...
I'M NERVOUS
BECAUSE
I FINALLY
GET TO
SEE HER?

THIS IS
BAD.

I WISH HE
HADN'T
SEEN ME
LIKE THIS.

He wanted to give me
a hard time again.



HEY.



...I SAID,
"HEY!"

BWA?!

TWITCH

SHOULDN'T
YOU BE
GOING
SOON?

I THOUGH
YOU WERE
GOING TO GET
HONDA-SAN
TODAY.



FOR SOME
REASON...

...I'M
INSANELY
NERVOUS.

AND WHEN
I FINALLY
GET TO
SEE HER.
CRAP!



I HAVE
SOME-
THING...

...IMPORTANT
TO DO
MYSELF.



I'LL
PASS.

WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?



I'M SURE YOU
DON'T WANT ME
GETTING IN THE
WAY OF YOUR
LONG-AWAITED
REUNION.

I
DON'T--

BE-
SIDES.

RIGHT.

WHATEVER
YOU SAY.



JUST BE
YOURSELF.
YOUR STUPID,
NORMAL
SELF.

^{Anyway}
DON'T
SCREW THIS
UP, YEAH?



FOR SOME
REASON, I DON'T
REALLY KNOW
ANYMORE.

MAN.

WHAT
WAS BEING
NORMAL
LIKE?

BE
"NORMAL."

I
JUST...

AND
MORE
THAN
ANY-
THING...

HOW DID
I ALWAYS
USED TO
TALK TO
HER?



RIGHT
NOW, DO I
REALLY...

...STILL
LIKE HER?

WHAT
DO I LIKE
ABOUT
HER?

AND WHAT
DO I LIKE
ABOUT THAT?

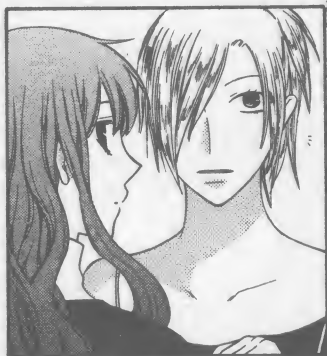
HOW MUCH
DO I LIKE IT?

AND
WHAT
ABOUT...
ME?

...WILL
SHE STILL
ACCEPT ME?

SO MUCH
STUFF HAS
HAPPENED
RECENTLY.

AND SHE
THINKS
I DUMPED
HER.





MAN.

NONE OF
THAT...

...OH.

...REALLY
MATTERS
AT ALL.



I LOVE
HER.

I LOVE
HER.

...TOMORROW.

I LOVE HER...

...SO MUCH.



I COULD
DIE.

.....
!



CAN
I LAUGH
AS WELL?

I GUESS
ALL HE
CAN DO IS
LAUGH.

Siiigh

Ah
ha
ha.

Shake
shake
shake
shake

**SHE DID
RUN AWAY.**



...G.H.

DAMMIT!

I'M
FASTER
THAN
SHE IS!



GOOD
MORNING.

HI.

MACHII?



...TALK
TO YOU
ABOUT
SOME-
THING
TODAY?

UM,
HEY.

CAN
I...



YEAH.

IT
WON'T
TAKE
LONG.



THERE'S
SOME-
THING...



SORRY
FOR THE
SUDDEN
CALL.

WERE
YOU
ASLEEP?

...

YEAH...



*I WON'T LET
HER GET AWAY
THIS TIME.*



THE
HELL...?



I COULD DIE...



...I
REALLY
WANT
YOU...

...TO
HEAR.

MACHI...

I COULD DIE.

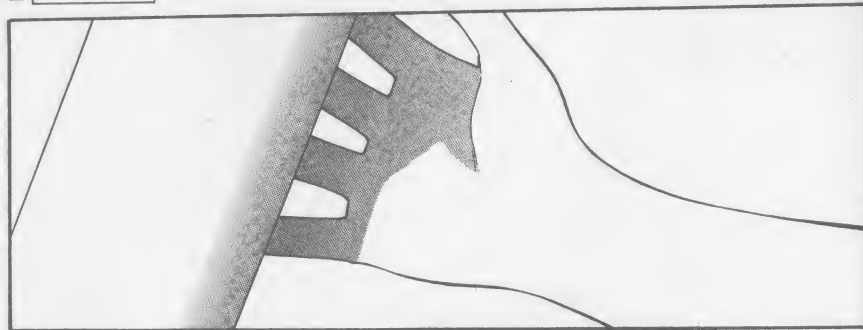
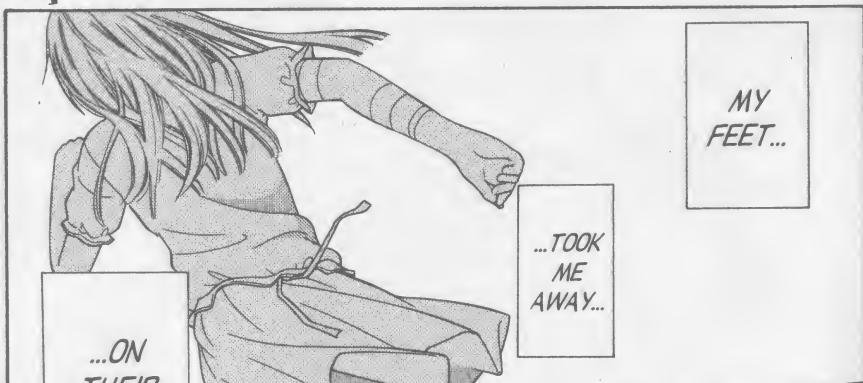
*...I WANT
HER SO
BAD.*

YOU WERE
JUST IN THE
HOSPITAL--
STOP RUNNING
LIKE A CRAZY
PERSON!

ル



Chapter 129





WHEN
I SAW
HIM...

ONE
MORE
TIME...

...T...

...I WAS GOING TO SMILE.





A a a a a h h h h h . . .



BUT IT'S
NO USE.





IT'S
ALL...

I CAN'T
DO IT.



ONCE I
UNDER-
STOOD
THAT...

...FOR ME
TO DO.

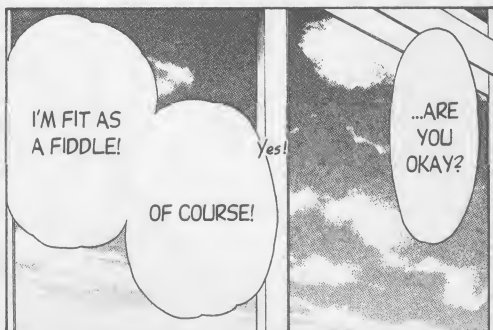
IT'S
ALL...

...OVER.

I KNOW
THAT.

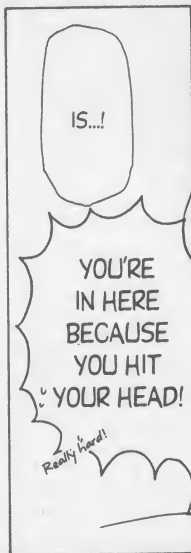
THERE'S
NOTHING
LEFT...







...SORRY
HE...



Really hard!



Ahh!

S-STOP
DOING
THAT! HEY!

I'M SORRY!



...
HURTS.

IT
HURTS.

THE
SOUND
OF HIS
NAME...

...IS LIKE
A KNIFE IN
MY HEART.

IS
EVERYTHING
ALL RIGHT
AT HOME?

IS THE
LAUNDRY
PILING UP?!

HOW IS...
THE
CLEANING...

MY
CHEST...



I CAN'T...

...BE LIKE
THIS.



I'LL ONLY
TROUBLE
THEM.

I CAN'T
KEEP...

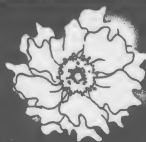
...HESI-
TATING.

EVERY-
ONE...



AND NOT
LETTING
GO.

...AND KYO-KUN.



"I'M DISILL-
LUSIONED."





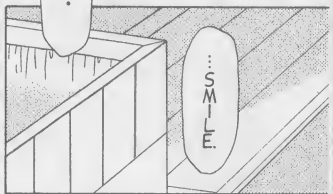
S M I L E . . . !

**DON'T
FORGET.**

WHEN
YOU SEE
HIM ONE
MORE
TIME...



I CAN'T DO
THAT, NO
MATTER
WHAT.



S M I L E .



...TRAINED
MYSELF.

huff

huff

...YOU
HAVE TO
SMILE.

I
EVEN...

OR I...
THOUGHT
I DID.

huff



REALLY.

I CAN'T DO
ANYTHING
RIGHT.



I WASN'T
LYING
WHEN I
THOUGHT...

EVEN IF...

... "THAT'S
OKAY."

...A
WASTED
EFFORT.

へたり

huff
huff

IT
DOESN'T
MATTER.

IT
WAS
ALL...

huff



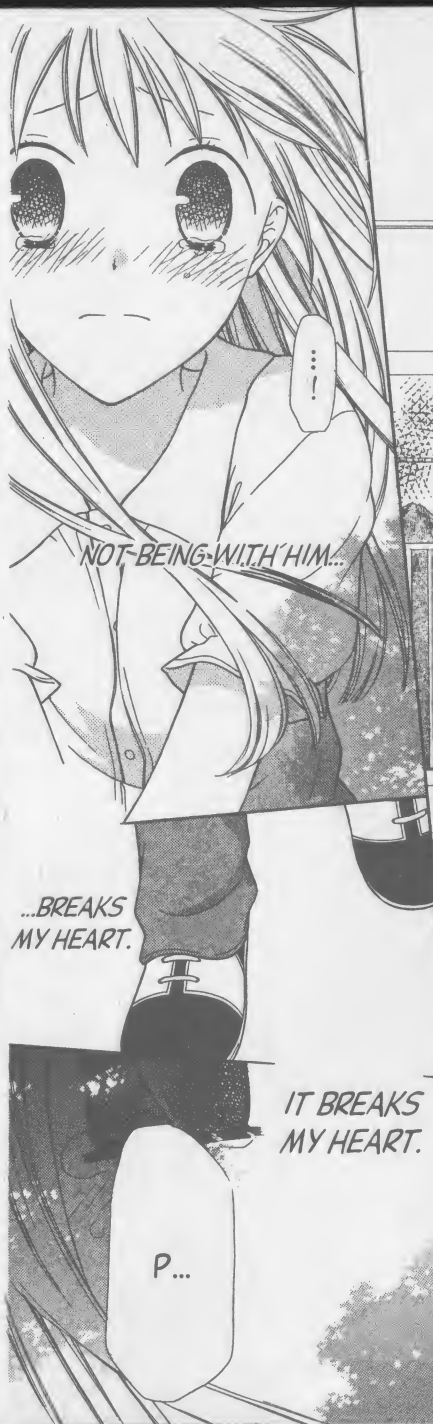
...BY HIS SIDE.

...I'M NOT...

BUT...

I WASN'T
GOING TO
LET IT
BOTHER
ME.

I MADE A
DECISION.



NOT BEING WITH HIM...

...BREAKS
MY HEART.

IT BREAKS
MY HEART.

P...



I WANT TO BE
BY HIS SIDE.



A boy in a dark t-shirt and pants stands on a rooftop, looking away. A girl with long blonde hair sits on a brick ledge, looking down. The background shows a cityscape with trees and buildings.

J-JUST A
LITTLE.

I CAN'T
CONTROL IT.

NOT REALLY.

PLEASE
...

...WAIT.



A close-up of a boy's face, looking down with a sad expression. His hand is visible near his face.

I DON'T
WANT
TO BE A
BURDEN.



A close-up of a boy's face, looking down with a sad expression. His hand is visible near his face.

I DON'T
WANT
HIM TO
HATE ME.

I DON'T WANT HIM...



A close-up of a boy's face, looking down with a sad expression. His hand is visible near his face.

STOP
CRYING!

STOP!



A close-up of a girl's face, looking up with a sad expression. Her hand is visible near her face.

SOON.

SOON,
I'LL...

STOP!

*...TO BE
DISILLUSIONED
ANYMORE.*



LOOK.



I WAS
ONLY...

...THINKING
ABOUT
MYSELF.






...ALL
OF YOUR
FEELINGS.

I WAS ONLY
THINKING
OF MY OWN
REGRETS.

I WASN'T
CONTROLLING
WHAT CAME
OUT OF MY
MOUTH.

I COM-
PLETELY
IGNORED...



...DOESN'T
ALWAYS
GIVE YOU
THAT LAST
CHANCE TO
APOLOGIZE.

...SHOULD'VE
KNOWN THAT
THIS WORLD...

I SHOULD'VE
KNOWN
BETTER.

ME, OF ALL
PEOPLE...



...I NEVER DID
LEARN.

THAT WOULD
BE LIKE...

I CAN'T LET
THAT SAME
THING HAPPEN
AGAIN.

I CAN'T.



I
WANT...



THIS
CAN BE
THE
LAST
TIME.

I DON'T
NEED
ANOTHER
ONE.

JUST
GIVE ME
THIS.

WILL YOU
GIVE ME
ONE LAST
CHANCE?



B--

I'M
SORRY.

FOR
MAKING
YOU
CRY.



I HURT
YOU A
LOT.

I'M
SORRY.



THIS...

...IS THE
LAST
TIME.



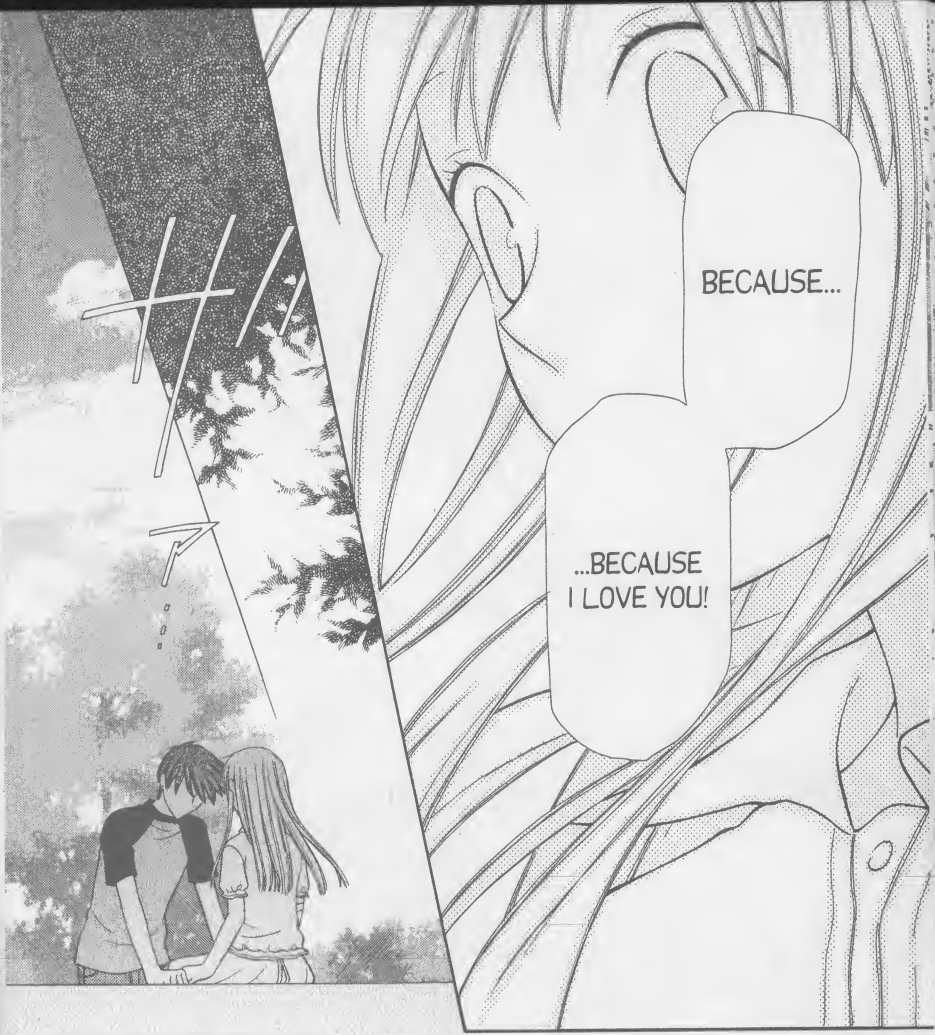
LISTEN
TO ME.

IF I'M
GONNA
KEEP
LIVING...

...I WANT
IT TO BE
WITH YOU.

I DON'T
WANT
ANYONE
ELSE.

...TO BE
WITH YOU.



BECAUSE...

...BECAUSE
I LOVE YOU!



...MEAN...




Downs...

...THAT...



Downs...





YOU'RE
ALREADY
HOLDING IT.

HIC...

TENS OF TIMES.



THOUSANDS
OF TIMES.

HUNDREDS
OF TIMES.

MMNGH!

NN.

NNGH!


I CAN HEAR THE
WORDS OVER AND
OVER AGAIN.



AND NOW...



...THIS
REALLY IS...




...LIKE THE
INSIDE OF A
DREAM.

KYO-KUN.

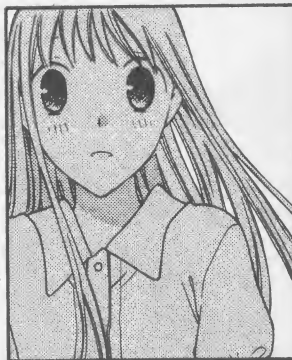


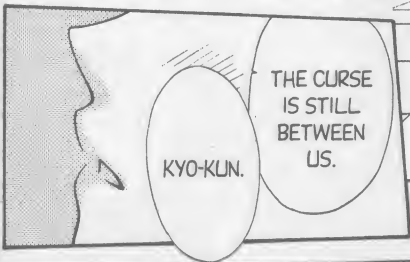
WHAT?!



YOU KNOW THIS
IS OUR SECOND
TIME, RIGHT?

...BY
THE
WAY.







...IS
INVINCIBLE.

I REALLY,
REALLY
DO.

AND THAT
FEELING...

OKAY,
KYO-
KUN?

HEH
HEH!



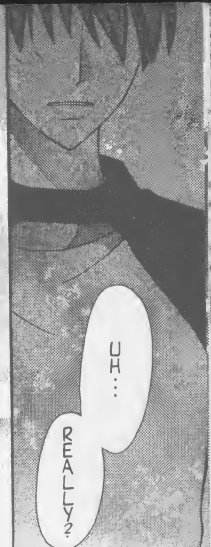
THERE'S
NOTHING
FOR ME
TO BE
SCARED
OF.



RIGHT?



...I'M
INVINCIBLE
TOO.



UH...
REALLY?

THEN I
GUESS
...



AS LONG AS I
HAVE YOU!







GOODBYE.





Chapter 130





I WAS
JEALOUS
OF YOU.



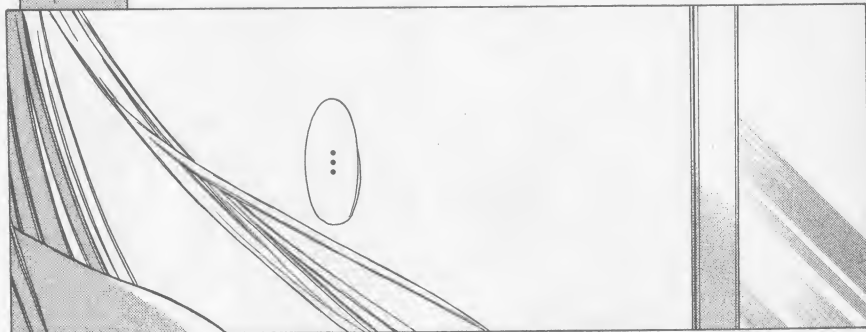
I WAS
JEALOUS.

I'M
SERIOUS.



YOU WERE
SO MUCH...

...PRETTIER
THAN ME.



...



YOU SAY...

...THAT I'M
PRETTY,
AKITO-SAN?

THEN
YOU'RE
PRETTY
TOO.



"DON'T DIVIDE
THINGS INTO
CATEGORIES."

LIKE
'PRETTY.'

WHEN
YOU DO
THAT...

...YOU JUST
USE THEM TO
SEPARATE
YOURSELF
OUT.

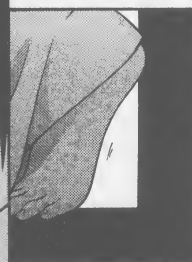


I'M...

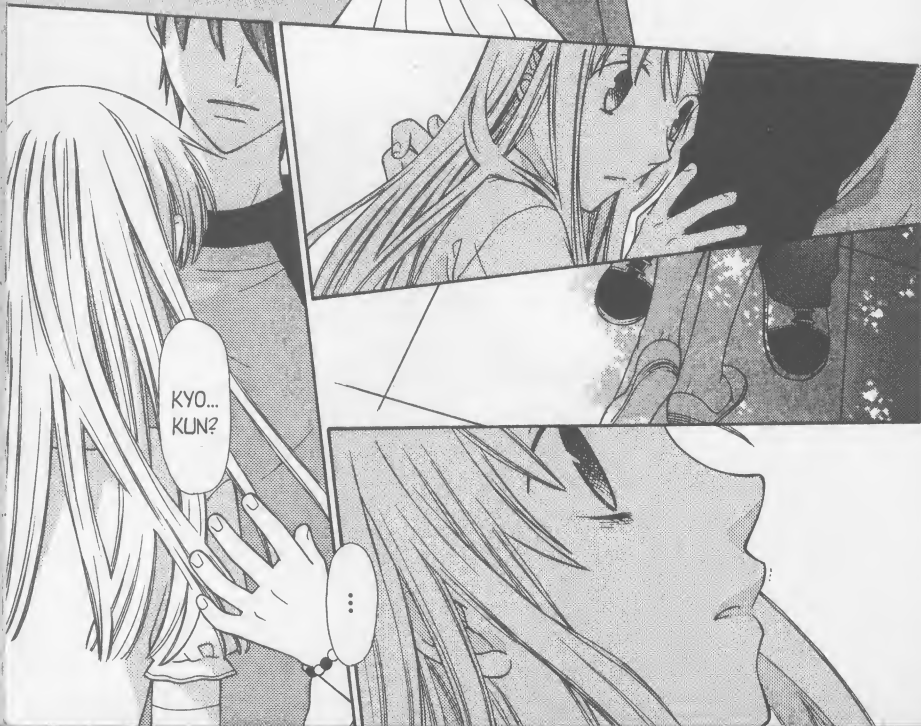
I'M NOT...
PRETTY.

PLEASE.





EVEN SO...





GOODBYE.

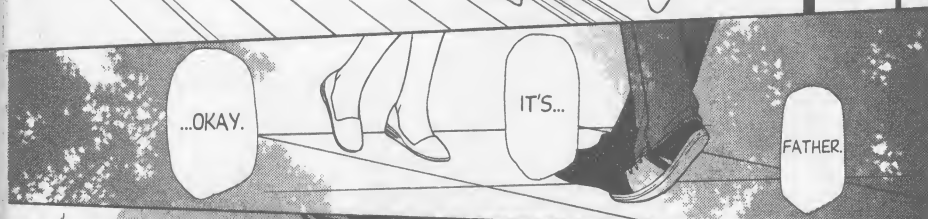
IT...



...OKAY
NOW,
RIGHT...?

IT'S...

...



...OKAY.

IT'S...

FATHER.



I CAN
JUST
BE...ME.

I DON'T
HAVE TO
BE "GOD"
ANYMORE.

..."SPECIAL"
ANYMORE.

I DON'T
HAVE...

...TO BE...



RIGHT...?



I KNOW
WHAT
I DON'T
HAVE.

I KNOW
I DON'T
HAVE
ANYTHING
REDEEMING
ABOUT ME,
BUT...!



I-I CAN
START
DOWN...



...MY
OWN
PATH.



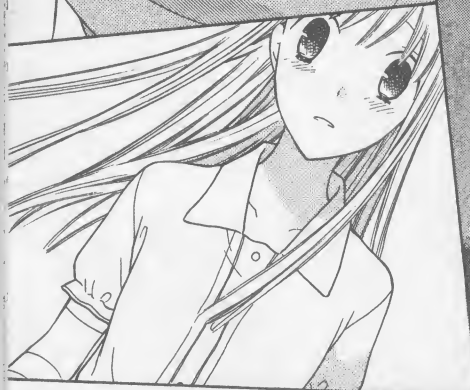
I...

"I" AM...



SO
HURT.

SO
SCARED!



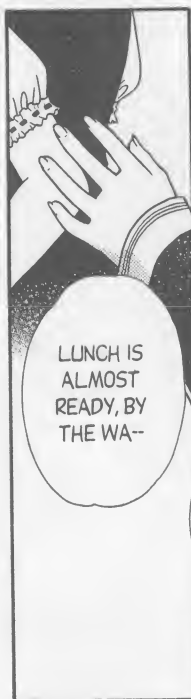
GOODBYE.

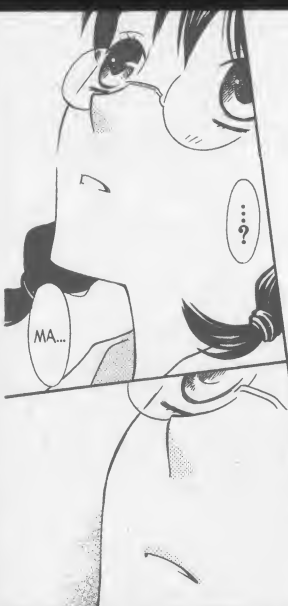




GOODBYE.







WH...

WHAT'S
WRONG?!

RITSU?
?!

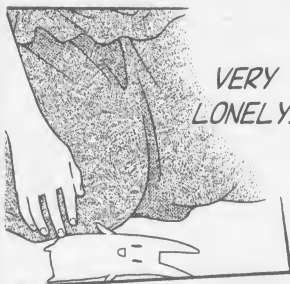
GOOD-
BYE.

ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?!
YOU'RE NOT
HURT, ARE
YOU?!

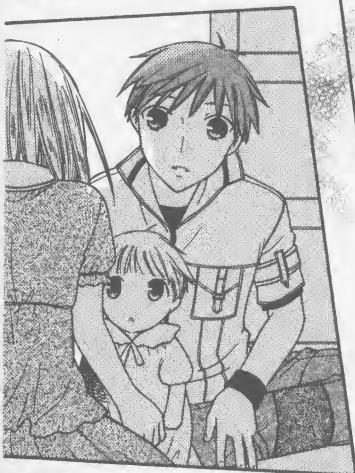
EVERY-
ONE

AND
NOW...

...I CAN
FINALLY
TELL YOU
THAT.



VERY
LONELY.




IT'S
LONELY
TO SAY
GOODBYE.





*"BEGINNINGS
HAPPEN BECAUSE
THERE ARE
ENDINGS."*



*"PARTINGS ARE THE
BEGINNINGS OF NEW
MEETINGS."*

NO.



NOT NOW.



*I DON'T WANT
TO HEAR...*



...THOSE SIMPLE
CLICHÉS.



...THIS IS
PRETTY
DEPRESSING.

HUNH.

IN A
WAY...



*MAYBE THERE'S
NOTHING WE CAN
DO ABOUT THIS.*

*BUT AT LEAST,
FOR NOW...*



PLEASE.

*CRY WITH
ME.*





*...CRY
WITH ME.*



*LIKE IT'S RAGING
AGAINST THE
WORLD.*

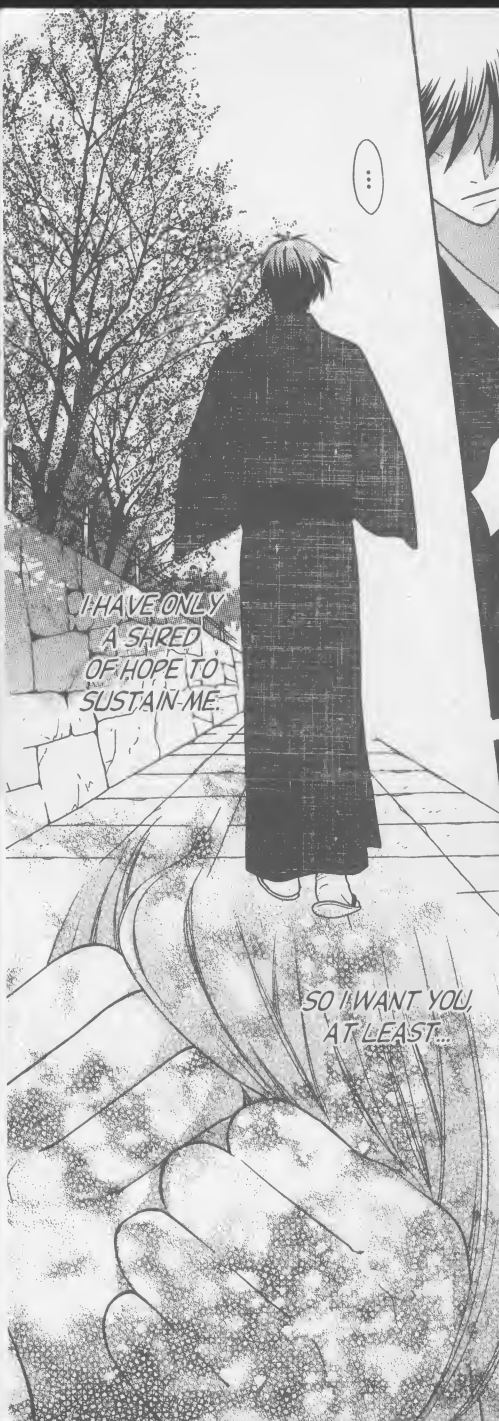
*LIKE YOUR
ENTIRE BODY...*

*...IS SCREAMING
AT THE SKY.*



I LOST SOMETHING.

*AND I DON'T HAVE A
SINGLE GUARANTEE.*



A character with short dark hair, wearing a long dark robe, is walking away from the viewer on a stone path. The path is lined with trees and a stone wall on the left. The character's hands are clasped in front of them. The scene is in black and white.

THE FEAR OF LIVING
IN THIS WORLD AGAIN
AFTER THAT...

I HAVE ONLY
A SHRED
OF HOPE TO
SUSTAIN ME.

SO I WANT YOU,
AT LEAST...

...H H.

SO
THIS...

...IS
HOW IT
FEELS.



...TO CRY.

CRY.

CRY WITH
ME.

*LIKE THE DAY YOU WERE FIRST
BORN INTO THIS WORLD.*





BUT
DESPITE
ALL THAT,
AKITO-SAN.

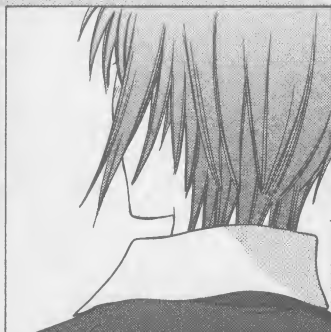
...THAT I
CAN BE
YOUR
FRIEND.

PLEASE?

I STILL
HOPE...



"...TO BECOME
FRIENDS."





*...TO BELIEVE IN THEM
AFTER THE FACT.*

...

*YOU
NEVER
GIVE UP,
DO YOU?*

"MEETINGS."

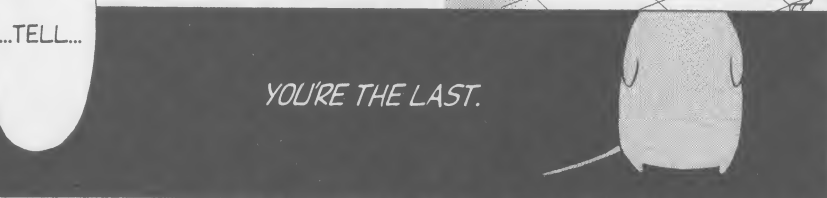
"BEGINNINGS."

IT'S NOT TOO LATE...



SMILE.





THANK YOU!

FOR KEEPING...

PRES...

IS SOMETHING
WRONG?

PRESIDENT?

...THE VERY DISTANT...

...PROMISE.

PRESIDENT?

THANK YOU!

AND GOODBYE.



Chapter 131

BUT THE
PERSON WAS
STILL ALONE.

AFTER LEAVING
THE MOUNTAIN...

...THIS PERSON
LEARNED THAT
MANY, MANY PEOPLE
LIVED BELOW IT.

THE
PERSON
WAS
ALONE.

FOR A
LONG,
LONG
TIME.

ONCE UPON A TIME,
IN A PARTICULAR
PLACE...

...THERE LIVED
A PERSON.

A black and white manga-style illustration. A person with extremely long, straight hair is seen from behind, looking out of a window. The window has a wooden frame with three visible hinges or ties. Outside the window, a landscape with hills and a cloudy sky is visible. The person is wearing a dark, layered garment. The overall tone is contemplative and somber.

EVEN WITH A THOUSAND
POWERS AND A
THOUSAND LIVES...

...AND A
THOUSAND
MEMORIES.

THE PERSON LEARNED
THAT SUCH THINGS WERE
DIFFERENT FROM WHAT
MOST OTHER PEOPLE HAD.

ONE DAY...

...A CAT
CAME TO
VISIT.



THE PERSON WAS
BEWILDERED
BY THE SUDDEN
VISITOR.

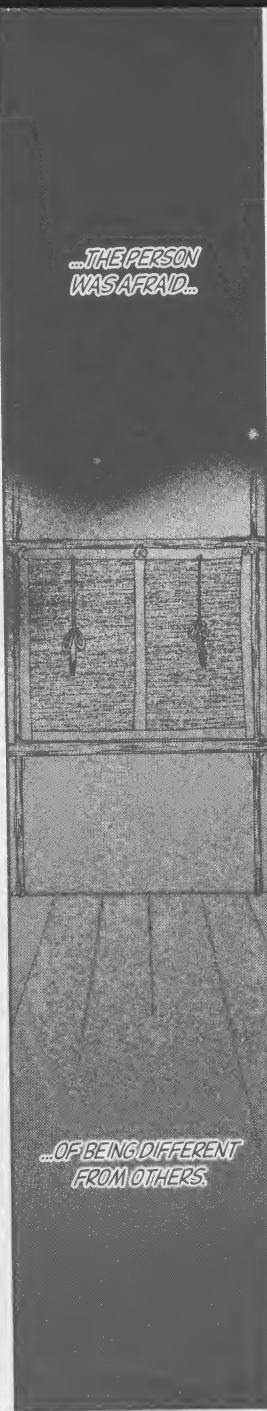


THE CAT BOWED HIS
HEAD REVERENTLY.



"I HAVE
HUMBLY
WATCHED YOU
FOR A LONG
TIME," HE SAID.

...THE PERSON
WAS AFRAID...



AND THUS...

...DEVELOPED A
FEAR OF OTHER
PEOPLE.



A FEAR OF
GETTING HURT.



...OF BEING DIFFERENT
FROM OTHERS.

DESPITE HAVING
MANY POWERS...



"YOU ARE A VERY
MYSTERIOUS PERSON."

"I AM MERELY
A STRAY CAT..."

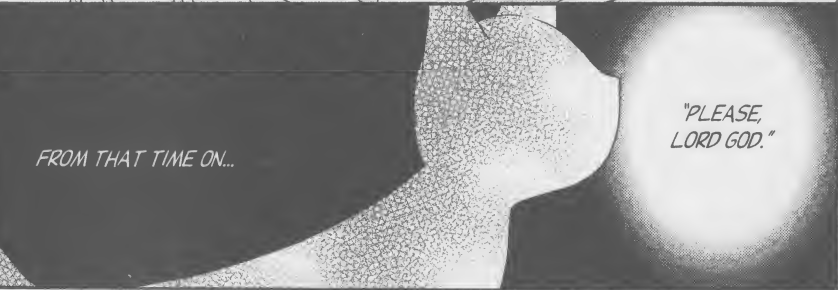
"I CANNOT STOP BEING
ATTRACTED TO YOU."

...BUT PLEASE LET ME
BE BY YOUR SIDE."



FROM THAT TIME ON...

"PLEASE,
LORD GOD."



AND THAT MADE GOD
VERY, VERY HAPPY.

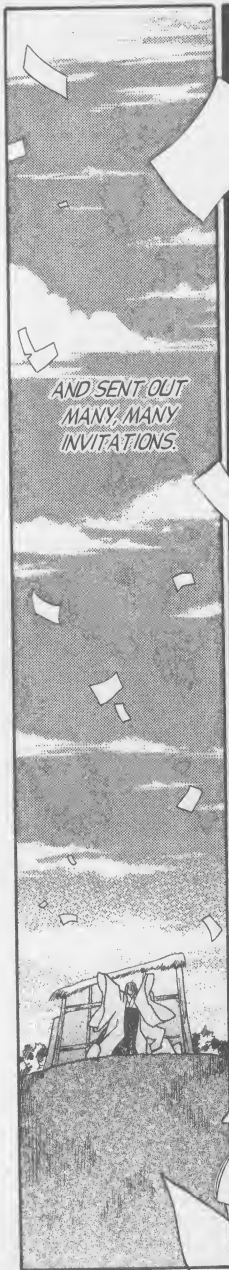
NOT EVEN FOR
A MOMENT.



...THE CAT KEPT
HIS PROMISE.

HE NEVER LEFT
GOD'S SIDE.





AND SENT OUT
MANY, MANY
INVITATIONS.

GOD...

...WROTE
MANY, MANY
INVITATIONS.

"I SEE. MAYBE I
CAN GET ALONG
WITH OTHERS...

...AS LONG AS
THOSE OTHERS
AREN'T PEOPLE."

SUDDENLY,
GOD HAD
AN IDEA.

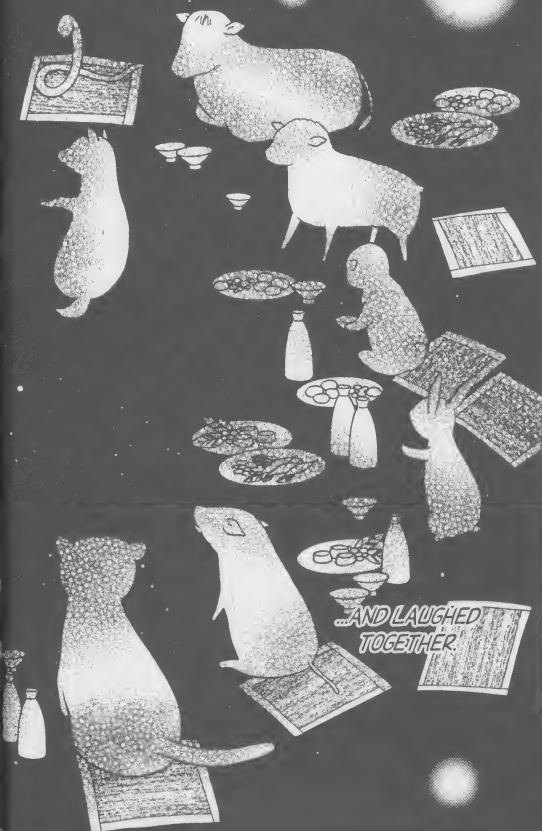
"IF THEY KNOW THE
SAME FEELINGS
THAT I DO...

...MAYBE I CAN HAVE A
PLEASANT BANQUET
WITH THEM."

GOD WAS THUS
SURROUNDED
BY THIRTEEN
ANIMALS IN ALL.

THEY ALL HELD A
BANQUET EVERY NIGHT
THE MOON SPARKLED.

THEY SANG, AND DANCED...



...AND LAUGHED
TOGETHER.

AS A RESULT...



...TWELVE ANIMALS
CAME TO SEE GOD.

BUT ONE NIGHT...

...THE CAT COLLAPSED.



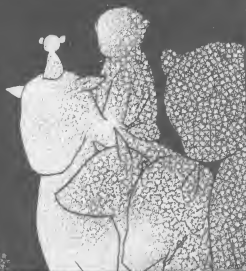
NOTHING COULD
BE DONE.

HIS LIFE HAD
RUN OUT.



THEY ALL
CRIED.

IT MADE
THEM
REALIZE...



AND GOD, TOO, LAUGHED
OUT LOUD FOR THE
FIRST TIME.

THE MOON QUIETLY
WATCHED OVER...



...THE INHUMAN
BANQUET.



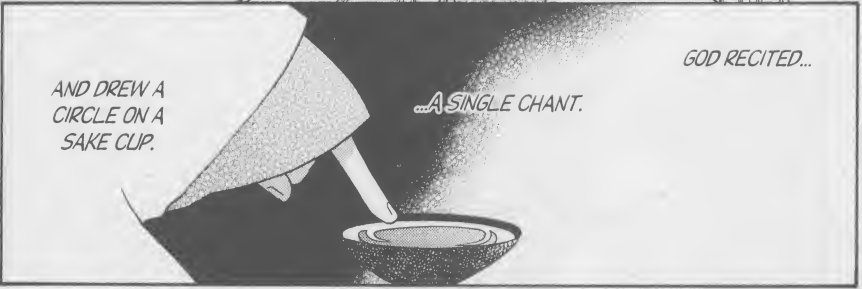
...THAT SOMEDAY,
EVERYONE WOULD DIE.

THE BANQUETS WOULD
COME TO AN END.

SOMEDAY, THEY
WOULD...

NO MATTER HOW DAZZLING
AND PRECIOUS THEY WERE,


NO MATTER HOW MUCH
THEY ENJOYED THEM...



AND DREW A
CIRCLE ON A
SAKE CUP.

...A SINGLE CHANT.

GOD RECITED...



"OUR BOND,"
GOD SAID.

AND THEN SPOKE
TO EVERYONE.

GOD MADE THE
CAT DRINK.



"WE WILL ALL
BE FRIENDS."

"UNTIL THE END
OF TIME."

"WE WILL BE
PERMANENT."

"HOWEVER
MANY TIMES
WE DIE."

"HOWEVER
MANY TIMES
WE ARE
REBORN."

"OUR
COUNTLESS
BANQUETS."

"JUST AS
BEFORE"

"EVEN IF I OR
ALL OF YOU DIE
AND ROT AWAY..."

"WE WILL
HAVE..."

"WE WILL BE TIED
TOGETHER BY AN
ETERNAL BOND."

ALL IN ORDER...

...THEY SHARED THE
DRINK OF THEIR VOW.



NEXT,
THE OX.

NEXT, THE
TIGER.

NEXT, THE
RABBIT.

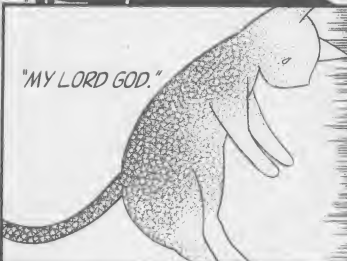


EVERYONE NODDED
EMPHATICALLY.

THE RAT WAS THE
FIRST TO DRINK.



"MY LORD GOD."



...THE CAT STARTED
TO CRY, HIS
BREATH FAINT.

WHEN FINALLY
THE BOAR DRANK...

"MY LORD GOD..."

...I DON'T WANT
ETERNITY!"

"MY LORD..."

...WHY DID YOU
MAKE ME DRINK?"





IT DEVASTATED
THEM.

THEY SCOLDED
AND ADMONISHED
THE CAT.



"MY LORD GOD, MY
LORD GOD. I KNOW
IT'S FRIGHTENING...

EVEN SO, THE
CAT SPOKE.



...BUT LET US
ACCEPT THAT
THINGS END."

"I KNOW IT'S SAD..."

...BUT LET US ACCEPT
THAT LIVES DEPART."

TO GOD
AND THE
OTHERS...

...THEY
WERE
WORDS OF
REJECTION.

"I DON'T NEED
PERMANENCE."

THOSE WORDS...



...WERE
UNEXPECTED.

THE CAT
TWITCHED
HIS TAIL ONE
LAST TIME
AND DIED.

"NEXT TIME,
I DON'T WANT TO
MEET YOU WITH
ONLY THOSE
OF US HERE."

"I DON'T WANT TO
ONLY SEE YOU IN
THE MOONLIGHT."

"BUT I WAS
HAPPY TO BE
WITH YOU."

"I WANT TO MEET
YOU WHILE
YOU'RE SMILING..."



"IF ONE MORE
TIME!"

"...WE BOTH
DIE AND ARE
REBORN..."

"...WITHIN A RING
OF PEOPLE."

"I WANT TO SEE
YOU SMILING UNDER
THE LIGHT OF THE
SUN AS WELL."

"...AND IF WE
MEET AGAIN..."

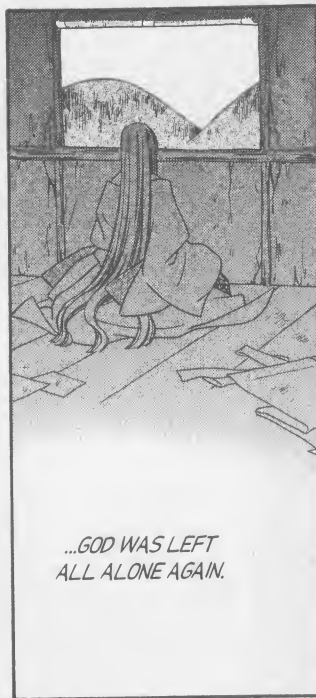


SOME TIME
AFTER THAT,
ONE AFTER
ANOTHER...

...THE
OTHERS
DIED.



FINALLY,
AFTER THE
DRAGON DIED...



...GOD WAS LEFT
ALL ALONE AGAIN.

THEY WERE
FILLED
WITH THE
SENSE
THAT THE
CAT HAD
BETRAYED
THEM.



BUT NO ONE CARED ABOUT
THE CAT ANYMORE.

"WE'LL HOLD OUR
BANQUETS."

"ONCE AGAIN..."

...AND AS MANY TIMES
AS WE WANT."

"FOR AS LONG AS
WE WISH."



"WITHOUT CHANGING."

"I MAY BE SAD AND
ALONE NOW..."


AND THEN
ANOTHER
DAY CAME.

A DAY WHEN
EVEN GOD DIED.

BUT GOD
WASN'T
AFRAID.

BECAUSE GOD
WAS SUPPORTED
BY THE PROMISE
MADE WITH
THE OTHERS.

"AGAIN."



EVERYONE
HAS FOR-
GOTTEN...

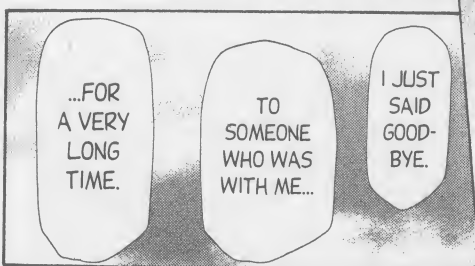
...THEIR FIRST
MEMORIES.

...FROM
LONG,
LONG
AGO.

...BUT EVERYONE
IS WAITING ON
THE OTHER
SIDE OF OUR
PROMISE."

THEIR FIRST
PROMISE.

NOW IT'S
A TALE...





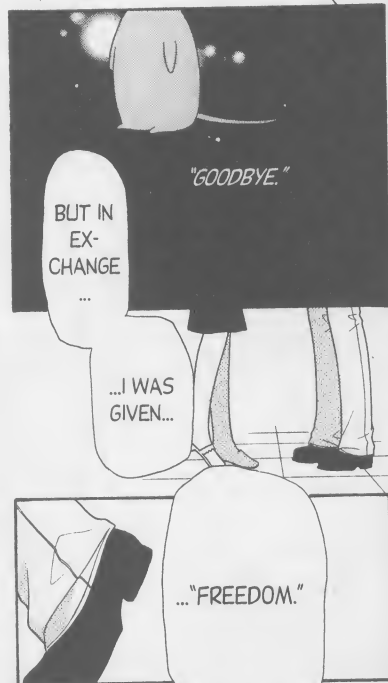
IT'S NOT...
FAIR OF
ME TO BE
LIKE THIS.

DAMMIT.

BUT
NOW...

...THAT
WE'RE
APART...

.....
!



"GOODBYE."

BUT IN
EX-
CHANGE
...

...I WAS
GIVEN...

..."FREEDOM."



...NO.

I
WON'T.

I'M
SURE
OF IT.



...

UM.

YOU
WON'T
EVER...

...SEE THIS
PERSON
AGAIN?



I'M
SORRY.


...TO TELL
YOU.

...WHAT
I WANTED...

THIS ISN'T
EXACTLY...

I'M NOT
MAKING
ANY
SENSE,
AM I?

YOU
MUST
BE CON-
FUSED.



RIGHT NOW,
THIS IS
ENOUGH.

BUT
WHATEVER.



WHAT?



THERE'S
SOME
THING...

...I
WANTED
...

WAIT.

...TO ASK
YOU TOO.



ER...

I...

ACTU-
ALLY...



OF
COURSE
IT'S
OKAY.

...



SAY IT.



IS IT
OKAY...

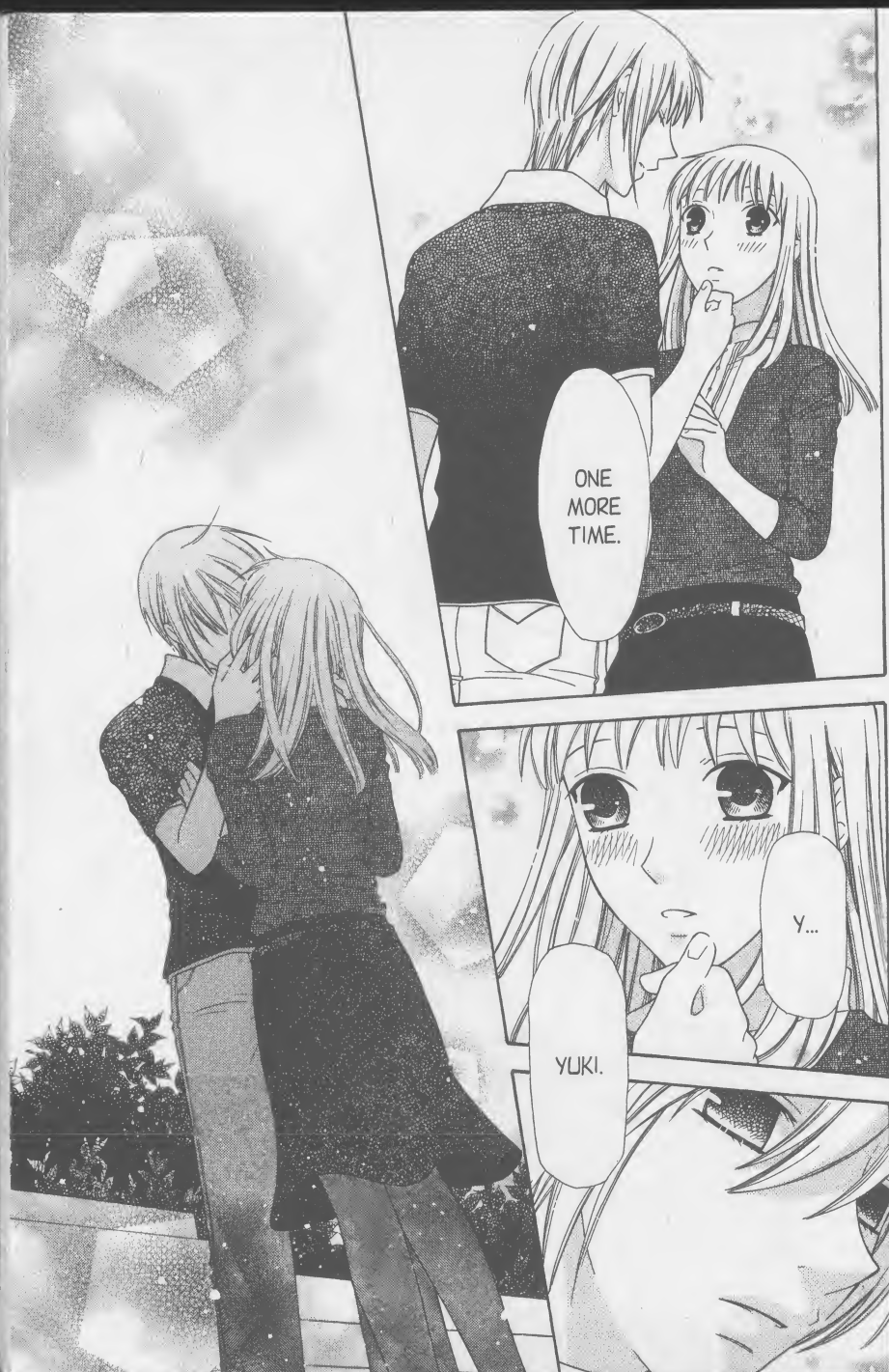
...IF I CALL
YOU BY
YOUR
NAME?



YU...

...KI.


...



ONE
MORE
TIME.

y...

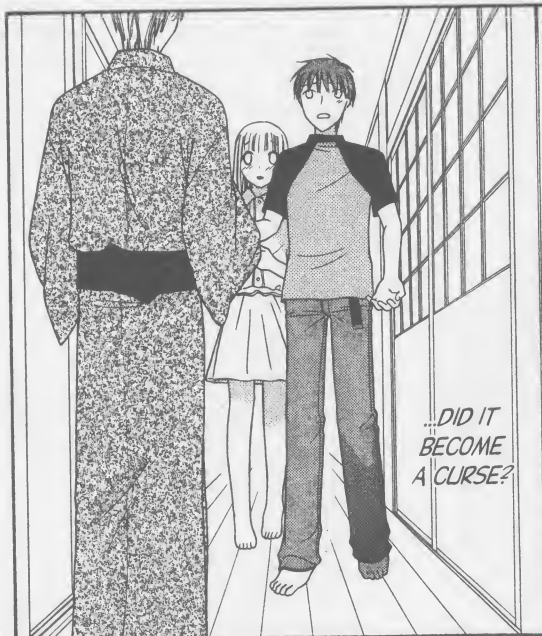
YUKI.



AS MANY
TIMES AS
YOU WANT.

THAT
FIRST...

...PROMISE.



...DID IT
BECOME
A CURSE?

AT WHAT
POINT...





WHEN DID IT
CHANGE...

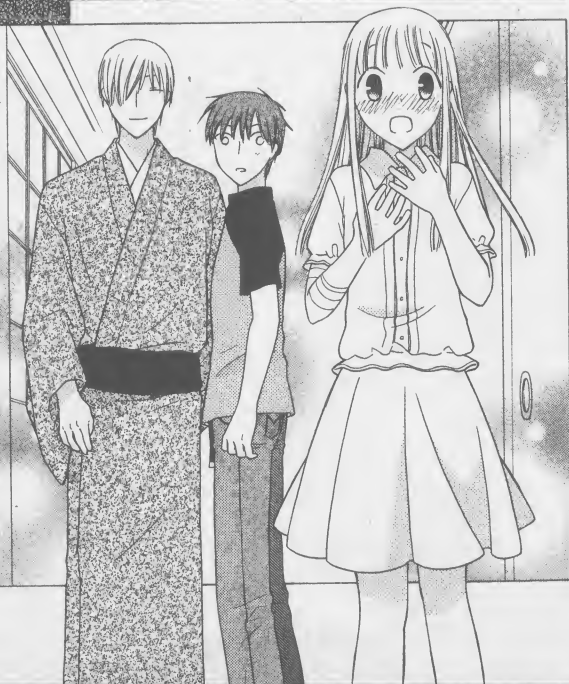


...INTO A BURDEN?



*THOSE DAYS THAT
WERE SO HAPPY.*

*THE DAYS THAT
WERE SO HARD
TO PART WITH.*





...SUPPOSED TO
BE LOVE THERE.



THERE
WAS...



AND IT
BECAME
NOTHING
BUT PAIN.



TIME PASSED.



PEOPLE CHANGED.

...TO ALL
OF YOU...

...WHO CONTINUED
TO SHOULDER
THAT EXHAUSTED
PROMISE...

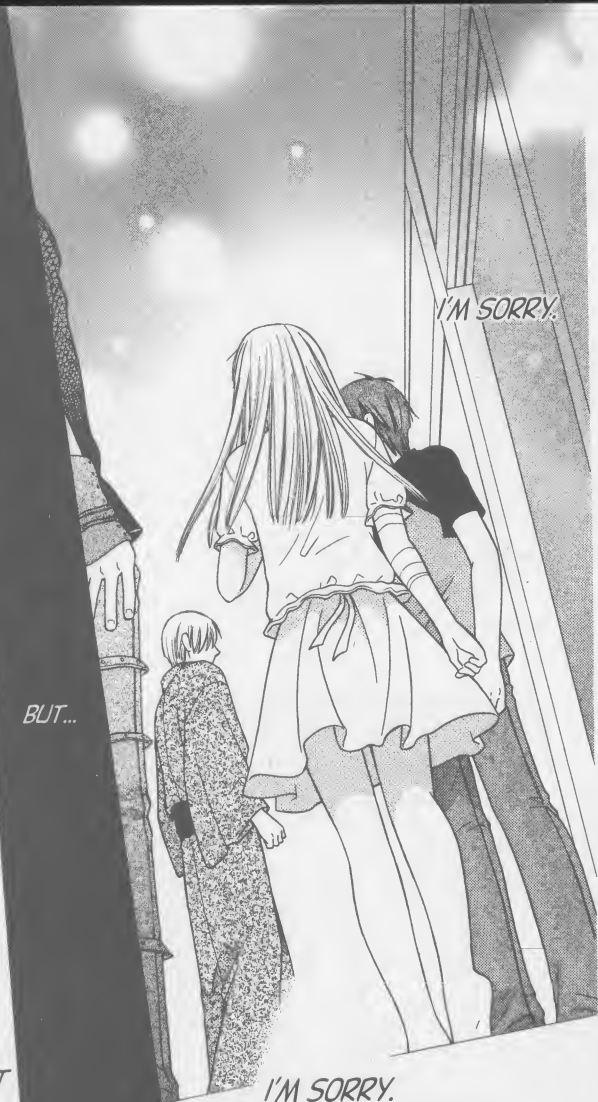
BUT...

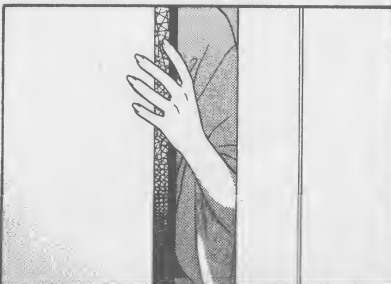
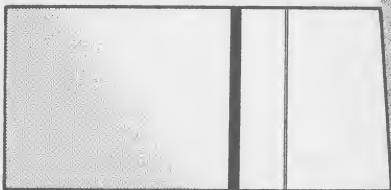
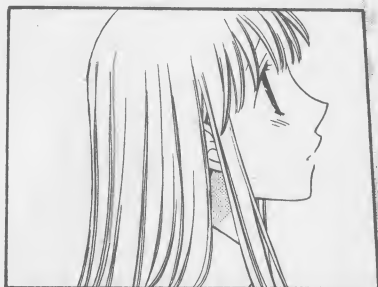
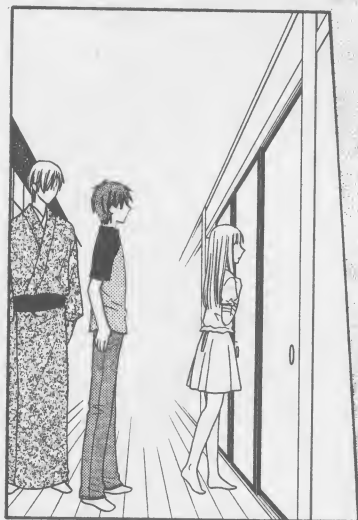
THE PROMISE
THAT LOST ITS
ORIGINAL FORM.

THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING I WANT TO
TELL YOU...

I'M SORRY.

I'M SORRY.






...IS
THANK
YOU.

THANK YOU.

A STORY
OF LONG,
LONG AGO.



THE FIRST
MEMORIES
THAT
EVERYONE
FORGOT.



IT WASN'T
UNTIL
MUCH...

...MUCH...



...MUCH
LATER...

...THAT
THE CAT'S
WISH WAS
FINALLY
GRANTED.

To Be Concluded in Volume 23

*I feel so
grateful!*

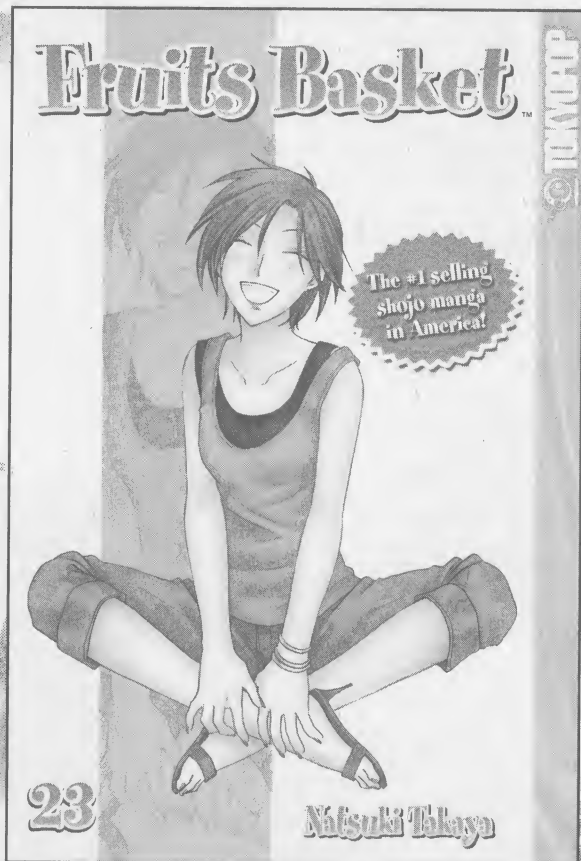
*Harada-sama, Araki-sama,
Mother-sama, Editor-sama
And everyone who reads and
supports this manga.*

And lastly, to you know who.

This has been Natsuki Takaya.



Next time in...



The Journey's End...

Curses have broken and the eternal banquet has finally come to a close. But there are still some loose ends to be wrapped up before the last page of Fruits Basket arrives! How will each of the members of the Zodiac deal with their newfound freedom? Can forgiveness come in the wake of Akito's past actions, and a new surprising revelation?

Fruits Basket Volume 23
Available July 2009

Fans Basket

Fans Basket is back thanks to awesome intern Stephanie Trautwein from Los Angeles. She picked out a great batch of art to highlight and wrote some inspired comments. Thanks for all your help, Stephanie! And of course, thanks to all the fans who keep sending us their wonderful work. To properly thank you all, we are sending out postcards to all of you who provided addresses. And to those who we couldn't reach, please know that we appreciate you so much. Thank you for helping make Fruits Basket the phenomenon that it is!

And so we can continue to appreciate all the great fan art you guys provide, TOKYOPOP is starting something new. From now on, please do NOT send any more fan art to our office. Huh? What? Relax! What we want instead is for you to upload the images to our website! This way, everyone can appreciate your work even after volume 23 is published. Check the end of this section for exactly what to do. Fruits Basket Forever!

- Alexis Kirsch, Editor



Jessica Lin
Age 13
Lexington, MA

I have to tell you, I wish I could draw this well when I was thirteen—or even now, for that matter! This artwork is so darling; Akito and Yuki's hair is shaped with great grace and the eyes, especially Yuki's, show great emotion. The question on Yuki's right side begs to be thought about. Is it love or is it hate? I do not think I understand the answer yet—do you?